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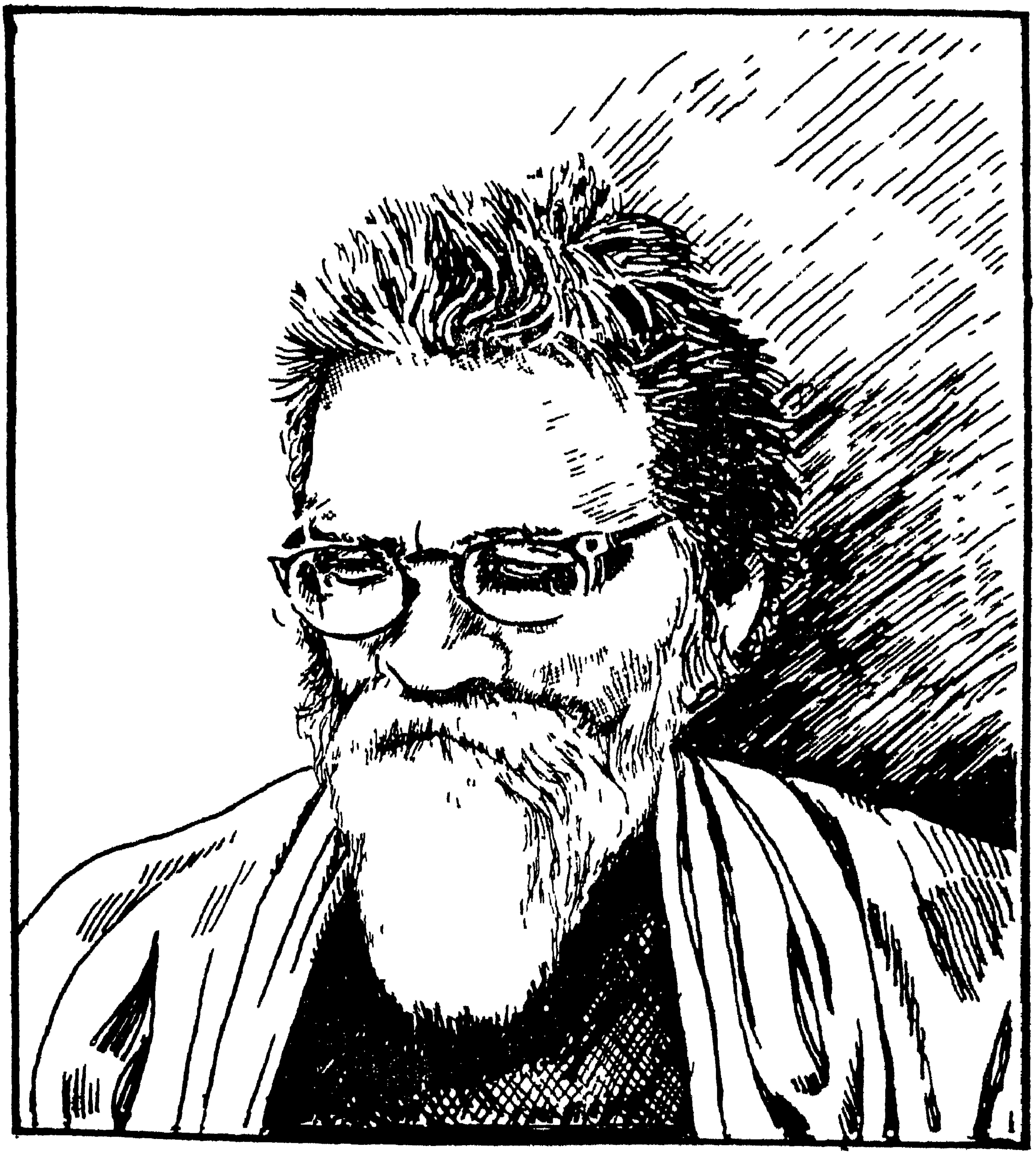

VINOBA BHAVE

POLITICAL THINKERS OF MODERN INDIA

VOLUME TWENTY-SEVEN

VINOBA BHAVE

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"Love is not like air, but like water. It stagnates if not allowed to flow freely To be pure it must flow unhindered. Love grows into devotion when allowed to flow freely."

—*Vinoba*

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PREFACE

It is a sad reflection on the people of India that Gandhism is fast disappearing from the land of Gandhi Most people pay tribute to Gandhi and talk of Gandhism, but few practise it Till his death, Vinoba Bhave was the living symbol of Gandhism, following into the footsteps of his master He not only paid tributes to Gandhiji, but practised Gandhism most immaculately By his example, Vinoba Bhave proved that Gandhism which is the philosophy of truth, love and non-violence, alone can save the world from the flames of war, hatred, oppression, torture, exploitation and greed By his actions he demonstrated the potentialities of Gandhism and appealed to the people not to forget the message of Gandhiji

Vinoba Bhave was born on 11 September 1895 at Gagode village in Pen tehsil of Kolaba district of Maharashtra His mother, Rukmini Devi, was a pure and pious woman His father, Narhari Bhave, a textile technologist, was scrupulous, methodical and straight-forward Vinoba Bhave spent a large part of his childhood with his grandfather He derived his spiritual education from his grandfather who was a learned but orthodox Brahmin His father, on the other hand, believed that India could became great if it revived its industries and followed the West in certain fields

Vinoba Bhave was, however, not impressed by his father's views and left him in 1916 to join Mahatma Gandhi in his ashram At that time Gandhiji had not assumed the leadership of India In the ashram he lived a simple but rigorous life of which cooking, weaving, grinding and scavenging were essential features Here was a school of national workers whom Gandhiji was to employ in the coming struggle for India's independence

Vinoba Bhave found in Gandhiji a restless spirit like his own,

yearning to express itself in the national interests. He willingly submitted himself to the hard discipline In these years Gandhiji was being drawn more and more into active politics In 1919 when the first protest week against the Rowlatt Bill was observed members of the ashram, including Vinoba Bhave, for the first time, went out to preach the gospel of non-violence to unruly crowds in Ahmedabad In 1921 Gandhiji selected Vinoba Bhave to take complete charge of the new ashram at Wardha Since then Vinoba Bhave, in his inimitable way, furthered the cause of India's independence and after independence he dedicated rest of his life to the service of the poor and the landless. His *Bhoodan* movement captured the imagination of the people and was the most significant movement in the post-Gandhi India

This book is divided into two parts Part I consists of selected speeches and writings of Vinoba Bhave and Part II consists of articles assessing the contribution of the true Gandhian

This book is a systematic piecing together of articles contributed by scholars and specialists to the various journals of national and international repute My special thanks are due to *Sarvodaya, AICC Economic Review, Indian Journal of Political Science, Gandhi Marg, Socialist India, Sunday Standard, The Vigil, New York Times Magazine, Modern Review, Yale Review, Harijan, The Times of India,* and the *United Nations World* from which I have drawn freely I express my deep sense of appreciation to all contributors for their scholarly papers and gratitude to the various librarians and eminent scholars in the field who extended their cooperation to me

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PART I

1

TALK ON THE GITA

VINOBA BHAVE

I

THE YOGA OF DESPONDENCY

(1) At the Heart of the Mahabharata

I shall speak to you about *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* The bond between the *Gita* and me transcends reason My heart and mind have both received more nourishment from the *Gita* than my body has from my mother's milk Where the heart is touched, there is no room for argument Leaving logic behind, I beat the twin wings of faith and practice and to the best of my ability, fly up into the heavens of the *Gita* I live and move in the atmosphere of the *Gita* The *Gita* is my life's breath To vary the image, I swim in the sea of the *Gita* when I speak of it, but when I am alone, I dive to the depths of this ocean of nectar and there rest at ease It has been decided that I should tell you every Sunday the story of this Mother, the *Gita*

The *Gita* has been set in the *Mahabharata* Standing in the middle of the epic, the *Gita* is like an elevated lamp which throws its light on the whole of the *Mahabarata* On one side of it, there are six *parvas,* and on the other, twelve Similarly on one side there are seven divisions of the army, and on other, eleven In between, the *Gita* is being taught

The *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* are the classics of our nation The characters that figure in them have become one with our lives For thousands of years now the whole of Indian life has

been, as it were, consecrated by the heroes and heroines of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* like Rama, Sita, Dharmaputra, Draupadi, Bhishma and Hanuman The characters of no other classics in the world have thus blended with the lives of the people Looked at in this way, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* are undoubtedly wonderful works If the *Ramayana* is an enthralling ethical poem, the *Mahabharata* is a comprehensive treatise on the science of society Vyasa has in his hundred thousand *slokas* given us innumerable portraits, customs and heroic actions which are as beautiful as they are real The *Mahabharata* tells us clearly that none but God is wholly free from blemish, that none too is an embodiment of absolute evil On the one hand, faults are pointed out even in Bhishma and Yudhishthira, and on the other, light is shed on the good points of Karna and Duryodhana The *Mahabharata* describes human life as a fabric woven out of both black and white threads Himself standing aloof, Bhagavan Vyasa projects on the screen of the world a picture, made up of both light and shade, of the universal movement Because of this perfect detachment and the high literary skill of Vyasa, the *Mahabharta* has turned out to be a huge mine containing pure gold Let us now explore it and carry away from it all the wealth we can

The *Mahabharata* has become a byword for bigness, but has not Vyasa anything of his own to tell us? Has he given in any place any special message of his own? Where is Vyasa's heart-beat to be heard? Again and again we come to jungle upon jungle of philosophy and preaching in the *Mahabharata* but has he also given anywhere the essence of all this, the central secret of this massive work? Yes, he has Vyasa has, so to speak, taken out the cream of the whole of the *Mahabharata* and put it in the *Gita* The *Gita* forms the epitome of the teaching of Vyasa, the quintessence of his thought That is why Sri Krishna says "I am Vyasa among the sages" This manifestation of Krishna in Vyasa becomes fullest in the *Gita* From ancient times the *Gita* has been given the status of an *Upanishad* The *Gita* is the *Upanishad* of *Upanishads* because Lord Krishna has drawn the milk of all the *Upanishads* and given it in the from of the *Gita* to the whole world, Arjuna is only an excuse Almost every idea necessary for the flowering of a full life occurs in the pages of the *Gita* That is why men of experience have said, truly, that the *Gita* is a treasurehouse of the

knowledge of *dhrama* Though small in size, the *Gita* is an important text of Hindu *dharma*

Everyone knows that the *Gita* was spoken by Sri Krishna. The devotee *Arjuna*, who listened to this great lesson, became so identified with it that he too came to be called 'Krishana.' Vyasa, trying to express the heart of the Lord and his lover, lost himself so completely that he too came to be called 'Krshana ' The speaker is Krishana, the listener is Krishna, the reporter is Krishana—thus all the three have, so to speak, become one, each fulfiling himself in this oneness To study the *Gita*, then, a concentration of this kind is necessary

(2) Arjuna's Stand

Some people think that the *Gita* should be taken to begin from the Second Chapter If the actual teaching commences in the eleventh *sloka* of the Second Chapter, why not start from there ? Someone even told me, "God has said that He manifests himself in 'अ' among the letters of the Nagari alphabet Here the *sloka* '*asochyaananvasoc hastvam*' begins spontanously with the letter 'अ' So we should take that as the beginning " Apart from this argument, in many ways it would be quite right to take this as the beginning All the same, the introductory portion preceding this does have a value of its own Whithout this preliminary narrative we cannot properly understand where exactly Arjuna stands and what the *Gita* is intended to teach

Some say that the *Gita* was spoken in order to remove *Arjuna's* weakness and make him enter the battle In their view the *Gita* not only teaches *karma-yoga* the way of action, but also *yuddha-yoga*, the way of conflict But a little thinking will show us how defective this argument is Eighteen divisions of warriors were ready for battle Are we to suppose that, by making Arjuna listen to the whole of the *Gita*, the Lord made him worthy of the army? It was Arjuna who quailed, not the army Was the army then more worthy than Arjuna ? This is utterly inconceivable It was not out of fear that Arjuna was turning away from the battle He was a great warrior, who had proved his valour on a hundred fields When Uttara's cattle were carried off he routed Bhishma Drona and Karna single-handed He was known as the underfeated, as the one true man among men Heroism was in every drop of his blood, in the very marrow of his bones In order to rouse

his feeling and goad him to action, Krishna Himself attibuted cowardice to him, but this missed the mark Then He had to change His tacties and give a discourse on ultimate wisdom and immediate knowledge So then it is clear that the aim of the *Gita* is not any thing so casy and simple as removing cowardice

Still others say that the *Gita* is meant to cure Arjuna of his scruples based on non-violence and make him inclined to fight In my opinion this view also is not right In order to examine this throughly, we have first to see the stand taken up by Arjuna To do this, the First Chapter and its continuation in the Second will help us greatly

Arjuna stood in the field of battle with his mind made up, and sustained by a sense of duty Fighting, the calling of the Kshatriyas, was in his very nature All possible attempts had been made to avoid war, but they had not succeeded They had pitched their claims at the lowest, and Sri Krishana himself had tried to mediate, but all in vain In these circumstances he has got together the kings of many countries, taken Sri Krishna as his charioteer, and is standing on the battle-field He says to Sri Krishna with heroic ardour "Place my chariot between the two armies so that I can look at the faces of the people who have come out ready to fight with me " Krishna did as he was told What does Arjuna see when he turns his gaze in all directions ? On both sides are gathered a thick surging throng of his own kinsmen and friends He sees grandfathers, fathers, sons and grandsons, four generations of his own people—family, friends and relations—finally determined to kill and be killed It was not as though he had not expected this But the actual experience strikes one with the force of a fresh impact

When he sees all his own people gathered together, a storm begins to rage in his heart He feels downcast In the past, he had killed innumerable warriors in many a battle But never till now had he felt so miserable, never had his bow, Gandiva, slipped from his hands, nor had his body quaked like this, nor his eyes become wet Then, why did all this happen now ? Was he moved by the spirit of non-violence now, as Asoka was to be later ? No, this was only attechment to his own people Even now, if those in front of him had not been his teachers, kinsmen and friends, he would have made their severed heads fly like so many balls But his attachment confused him and overshadowed his devotion to duty,

it was then that he thought of philosophy When a man with a sense of duty is caught in illusion, even then he cannot bear to face the naked fact of his lapse from duty He usually covers it up with an enquiry into principles Arjuna was just in this plight He began to declare ostentatiously that war was really a sin, that war would destroy the race, main *dharma*, encourage moral anarchy, spread antinomianism, disturb the seasons and bring many other disasters upon society With such arguments he tried to enlighten Krishna Himself

Here I am reminded of the story of a judge He had sent hundreds of criminals to the gallows, but one day his own son was produced before him, accused of murder He guilt was proved beyond doubt , the time had now come for the judge to pass sentence of death on his own son But then he began to hesitate He called all his ingenuity to his aid and began to argue thus "The death penalty is most inhuman, inflicting such punishment is no credit of man All hope of reform is destroyed The man who committed murder did so in the heat of excitement when he was beside himself When the madness has passed from him, to take him coolly and calmly to the gallows and kill him is a disgrace to human society, it is a great crime " He thought up many such arguments If his own son had not been brought before him, the Hon'ble Judge would have gone on relentlessly condemning people to death for the rest of his life But now, because of partiality for his own son, he argued thus This was not the voice of his own inmost self, it was born of his attachment "This is my son," he thought, and from his sense of attachment sprang all these high-sounding words

Arjuna's behaviour was like that of the judge in the story The arguments advanced by him were not in themselves wrong The whole world has seen precisely these consequences follow the last Great War But what we should think about is this that Arjuna had no real vision, it was only clever and superficial talk All this Krishna knew So, without paying any attention to Arjuna's words, he straight-away began to set about dispelling his illusion If Arjuna had actually been converted to non-violence, he would never have been satisfied until his real point had been met, however, much he was told about wisdom and knowledge But the *Gita* has nowhare answered this point of his, and yet Arjuna was satisfied The implication of all this is that Arjuna's attitude was

not that of non-violence, he did believe in fighting As he saw it, fighting was his natural, clear and inescapable duty But he wanted to evade this duty because his vision was clouded by illusion And it is on this illusion that the *Gita's* mace falls most heavily

(3) The Purpose of the Gita to Destroy Illusion

Arjuna used not merely the language of non-violence, but even that of *sannayasa,* complete renunciation "Even a life of renunciation is better than this bloodstained *kshatriya dharma*", he says But was this the way of life for him, his *svadharma* ? Was this the true expression of his nature ? Arjuna could have cheerfully donned the garb of a *sannyasi,* but how could he lived the life ? If, in the name of *sannaysa,* he went into the forest, he would start killing the deer there Therefore, the Lord told him plainly "Arjuna, your present reluctance to fight is delusion The nature that has become yours through the years will not permit you to refrain from fighting "

Arjuna felt at odds with his *svadharma* But however unattractive a man's *svadharma* may be, he has to find fulfilment by persisting in it, because it is only through such persistence in it, growth is possible These is no question of dignity involved here This is the law of growth *Svadharma* is not the sort of thing that one takes up because one thinks it is noble, or gives up because it seems lowly In fact it is neither great nor small It is equal to our measure In the words of the *Gita,* "*sreyaan svadharmo vigunah*" ("One's own *dharma,* even if devoid of merit, is the best for oneself ") The word "*dharma*" means not the organised religions, like Hindu-*dharma,* or Muslim-*dharma,* or Christian-*dharma* Every invidual has his own distinct *dharma* The 200 people who are in front of me have 200 different *dharmas* Even my own *dharma* today is not what it was ten years ago, it will not be the same ten years hence As the course of one's life changes through thinking and experience, one's old *dharma* drops off and a new *dharma* comes in its place One achieves nothing by self-willed obstinacy in this matter

However superior another's *dharma* may appear to be, it is not good for me to adopt it The light of the sun is dear to me By this light I keep growing The sun claims my worship too But if, for this reason, I wish to give up living on the earth, and go to the sun, I would be burnt to ashes On the other hand, even if living on earth is quite dull by comparsion,—even if the earth is quite

despicable when compared with the sun, even if it has to borrow its light—even then, so long as I lack the capacity to stand the sun's power, I shall have to stay away from the sun and keep growing on the earth. If someone were to say to a fish, "Milk is costlier than water, come and live in this milk," would it agree? Fish can only live in water, they will die in milk.

Even if someone else's *dharma* seems easier, one should not take it up. Quite often, it only appears easier. If a man in household life is not able to look after his children properly and, getting disguested, gives up the world, it will turn out to be hypocrisy and will even become burdensome. At the first opportunity, his old habits and associations will re-assert themselves. When a man goes into the forest because he is unable to bear life's burdens, the first thing he would do there is to build himself a small hut. Then, to protect it, he would put up a fence. Going on thus, he finds that too he has to manage, if anything, a bigger household. If a man's mind is truly detached, surely renunciation is not difficult for him. There are many texts in the *Smrtis* which show how renunciation can be easy. It is really a question of one's vocation. One's *dharma* consists in following one's true vocation. The question is not whether it is high or low, easy or difficult. The growth must be real, the evolution must be a genuine process.

But some imaginative people ask, "If *sannyasa*, the way of renunciation, is really always better than *yuddha dharma*, the way of conflict, why did Lord Krishna not make Arjuna a true *sannyasi* straightaway? Was this impossible for *Him*?" Of course, there was nothing that He could not do. But, in that case, what would be the meaning and purpose of Arjuna's life? What does he achieve himself? Almighty God has given us freedom. And so, let every man make his own efforts, for that is where the fun lies. Children find joy in drawing pictures themselves. They do not like someone else holding their hand and drawing the picture for them. If the teacher gives the answers to all the questions put to the child, how is the child's mind to grow? So the work of the teacher and the parents is only to make him attend, and help him with suggestions. God guides us all from within. He does no more than this. If, like a potter, He were to beat our clay and mould each of us into a pot, where is the sense in it? We are not just pots of clay. We are the living consciousness.

From all this discussion, you would have understood that the

purpose of the *Gita* is to remove the illusion that stands between us and our *svadharma* Arjuna was perplexed about his *dharma*, a delusion had arisen in his mind over his *svadharma* As soon as Sri Krishna points this out, Arjuna himself admits it The *Gita's* main task is to remove this illusion, this sense of "mine," this attachment This is why, after Arjuna has listened to the whole of *Gita*, Sri Krishna asks him "Arjuna, you have got over the illusion, haven't you ?" And Arjuna replies "Yes, Lord The illusion has left me, my *svadharma* is clear to me " If then we put together the beginning and the end of the *Gita*, we see that its aim and effect is to remove illusion This is true not only of the *Gita*, but of the whole of the *Mahabharta* Vyasa said right at the beginning of the *Mahabharta*, ' In this epic, I am lighting a lamp to dispel the dark illusion that covers the heart of humanity "

(4) Who Qualifies—the Pure of Heart

The introduction, which tells us about Arjuna's stand, has helped us greatly in understanding the rest of the *Gita* We should of course feel grateful for this But it helps us in another way too It thus introducing Arjuna, the *Gita* reveals to us the innocence and straightforwardness of his mind The word 'Arjuna' itself means one who is candid, straight and simple by nature He opened out his heart and laid before the Lord all that he felt and thought He kept nothing hidden and, he surrendered himself to Sri Krishna But to tell the truth, he had surrendered himself even at the beginning When he made Krishna his charioteer and entrusted to His hands the reins of his horses, even then, he had got ready to give into His hand the control of his mind and heart Come, let us also do it Let us not say, "Arjuna and Krishna Where are we to find our Krishna ?" Let us not get caught in the fallacy of historicity, that there was an individual called "Krishna " Krishna shines in the heart of each of us, the Inner Ruler He is nearer to us than the nearest So then, let us place all the flaws and falsehoods of our heart before Him and say, 'Oh Lord, I take refuge in you You are my sole master, my *guru* Show me the right way I shall tread only the path you show " If we do so, He who drove Arjuna's chariot will drive ours too, we ourselves shall hear the *Gita* in His own voice, and He will lead us to victory

II

THE TEACHING IN BRIEF SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND EQUANIMITY

(5) The Special Terminology of the Gita

Brother's in the last Chapter we saw Arjuna's '*yoga*' of despondency " When it is accompanied by innocence—honesty and simplicity—and surrender to God such as Arjuna's even despondency becomes a *yoga*, a means of union with God This is what is called ' The Churning of the Heart " (Fire used to be kindled by churning wood with a stick, and butter is made by churning milk) I have not called this stage "the *yoga* of Arjuna's despondency," with specific reference to Arjuna, the practitioner of the *yoga*, but I have given it the general name of "the *yoga* of despondency " Because, for the *Gita*, Arjuna is only the occasion We should not think that the Lord Pandurang came down to Pandharpur in Maharashtra for the sake of Pundalik alone, for we see that, using that opportunity, he has stood here for thousands of years now, in order to redeem us all, dull creatures as we are In the same way, even though the immediate occasion for the *Gita's* compassion was Arjuna, it is really intended for all of us Therefore, a general title like "*vishada yoga*," "the *yoga* of despondency," seems preferable for the First Chapter The tree of the *Gita* springs as a sprout of the *yoga* of despondency and, after manifold growth, bears in the final chapter the fruit of "*prasada yoga*," "the *yoga* of grace " It God wills it, we too shall reach that stage during the term of our imprisonment

The *Gita* begins its teaching in the Second Chapter and even even at the very beginning, the Lord tells us the great truths of life In doing so, his idea is that once the foundations of the edifice, the basic principles of life, are well laid, raising the superstructure becomes easy I interpret the term "*sankhya buddhi*" in the Second Chapter as the basic principles of life We should now see what these fundamental principles are But, before we do so, while discussing the word "*sankhya*," it would be useful if we clarify to ourselves the meanings of the technical words in the *Gita*

The *Gita* has a way of using old philosophical terms in new senses The evolution of thought takes place by the non-violent

process of grafting new meanings on to old words Vyasa is a good hand at this That is why the words of the *Gita* have gained a wider meaning, they have remained so fresh and green that thinkers could discover in them different meanings according to their own needs and experience All these interpretations are possible, each from its own point of view, and, as I understand it, we can interpret the *Gita* for ourselves without having to contradict any of them

There is a beautiful story in the *Upanishads* which is relevant here Once the *devas* (bright gods), *danavas* (dark gods) and men, all three went to Prajapati (the Creator) for advice Prajapati gave all three of them the same word of advice, the one syllable "*da*" The bright gods said, 'We *devas* are self-indulgent, the taste for sensual pleasures has taken hold of us So Brahma, by the sound '*da*,' has told us to acquire '*damana*' self-control" The dark gods said, "We *danavas* are now very prone to anger, and hard-hearted, the Creator has advised us, by the sound '*da*,' to cultivate '*daya*' compassion" The men said, "We men are given to greed, and have become mad after piling up wealth, by saying '*da*', Prajapati has advised us to practise '*dana*,' giving of gifts" The Creator approved of all their interpretations, because they had each arrived at their meaning in terms of their own experience While understanding the technical terms of the *Gita*, we should bear in mind this history from the *Upanishads*

(6) The Purpose of Life Using the Body for Svadharma

In the Second Chapter, three great truths are declared First, that the spirit is deathless and indivisible Secondly, that the body is transient Thirdly, that *svadharma* cannot be thrust aside Of these, *svadharma* is in the nature of a duty to be performed, the other two have to be known and realised In the First Chapter, I have already said something about *svadharma* This *svadharma* comes to one naturally One does not have to go out in search of one's own *dharma* It is not as if we have dropped down from the sky and started walking on the earth Before we were born, our society existed, our parents existed, our neighbours existed We are born into this stream of existence To serve the parents who gave me life becomes my duty from birth, so too, the duty of serving the society into which I am born The truth

is that, as we are born, our *svadharma* is also born with us But we can also say that it is there waiting for us even before we are born, for it is the purpose of our being born We are born to fulfil it Some people say that *svadharma* is like one's wife, just as the marriage-bond is considered indissoluble, the bond of *svadharma* also cannot be broken But even this comparison does not seem to me to go to the heart of the matter, it is only the second best I would compare *svadharma* to one's mother It was not left to me to choose my mother in this birth It had already been determind for me No matter what sort of person she is, there is no pushing her away That is precisely the case with *svadharma*—it is inescapable Besides *svadharma*, we have nothing else in all this world to rely on, to rest in To disown one's *svadharma* is to disown oneself, to commit suicide Only with its help can we move forward That is why no one should ever let go his hold on *svadharma* This basic truth has been firmly established

Our *svadharma* comes to us with such ease and naturalness that we should cherish it without effort But because of many kinds of illusion, this does not happen, or else, it is performed with great difficulty, or even if it is practised, it gets corrupted with many sorts of faults There are many external forms assumed by the illusion which strews with thorns the path of *svadharma* Yet, if we examine them, only one thing is at the bottom of it all, namely, a restricted and shallow identification of oneself with the body Myself, and those related to me through the body, set the limits of my expansion Anyone outside this circle is to me a stranger or an enemy This identification with the body builds a wall around me and cuts me off, and the odd thing about it is that I regard only the bodies as ' me ' and "mine " Falling into this double trap of identification of oneself and one's people with the body, we start putting up all sorts of little walls Almost everybody is busy doing this Of these enclosured, one man's is larger, and another's smaller, but, after all, every one of them is a wall And it is no thicker than his skin One man puts up an enclosure called "attachment to family" and lives in it, another builds and lives in an enclosure called "attachment to nation " One wall divides Brahmans and Non-brahmans, another divides Hindus and Muslims In this way, not one or two, but many such walls have been built

Wherever you turn, you see nothing but walls. Even inside this jail of ours, we have political and non-political prisoners, as if we could not live without these walls within walls. But what is the result of this? Only one thing, the wretched germs of disease multiply, and the health which is *svadharma* is destroyed.

(7) The Purpose of Life: Awareness of the Self that Transcends the Body

In this situation, it is not enough to perform one's *svadharma* with determination. Something more is required, it is necessary to be awake to two other principles also. One is: "I am not this mortal body, the body is only the outer covering." The other is: "I am the spirit that never dies, that cannot be cut up, that pervades everything." When these two principles are combined, one attains the perfect truth.

The *Gita* considers a knowledge of this truth so essential that it invokes this truth first, and beings in *svadharma* only later. Some people wonder why these verses about the ultimate truth occcur in the very beginning. But to me it seems that if there are any verses at all in the *Gita* whose position can never be changed, it is these.

If this much knowledge is stamped on our mind, then *svadharma* will not seem hard to us. Not only that, but anything not *svadharma* will seem hard. It is not at all difficult to realise the indestructibility of spirit and the transience of the body, because both these are true and real. But then, we have to reflect upon them. We should turn them round and round in our minds. We should train ourselves to belittle the body and exalt the spirit.

Look, this body changes every instant. Who is not caught in the cycle of childhood, youth and old age? Modern scientists say that in seven years the whole body changes, and that not even a drop of the blood remains. Our ancestors believed that the old body dies in twelve years. That is why they fixed the period for atonement (*prayaschitta*) or penance (*tapascharya*) or study (*adhyayana*) as twelve years. We hear stories of how a son meets his mother after many years of separation, and the mother cannot recognise him. This body that changes every moment, dies every moment, is this your true form? Night and day, the sewers of

your body keep flowing, and even in spite of your indefatigable scavenging it never gives up its uncleanliness, is this body *you* ? It is unclean, it is you who wash it It is sickly, it is you that treat it with medicine and water It fills three and a half cubits of space, you sport in the three worlds It is liable to endless changes, you witness these changes It is liable to death, and you ordain it When the distinction between it and you is so clear, why do you shrink into such smallness ? Why do you say that only that which is related to your body belongs to you ? And why grieve so much for the death of the body ? The Lord asks, "My friend, is the destruction of the body a cause for grief ?"

The body is like one's clothes When the old clothes wear out, we go in for new ones If one body were to stick for ever to the soul, the soul would be in a sad plight, it would stop growing, its joy would vanish, and the light of its knowledge would become dim This is why the destruction of the body cannot be something to grieve over Yes, if the soul could be destroyed, that certainly would be something to grieve over But the spirit is indestructible, it is an unbroken, everflowing stream Many bodies settle on it for a while and then disappear That is why it is all wrong to get caught in the circle of the body's relations and to suffer with divisions and distinctions, saying, "These belong to me, those belong to others " Look, this whole universe is like a lovely shawl, and a little boy takes a pair of scissors and cuts it up into pieces What childish and violent folly to use the body as a pair of scissors with which to cut up the universal spirit !

Really, it is matter for great sorrow, that in India, where knowledge of the eternal reality (*brahma-vidya*) was born, we can now see so many parties big and small, besides factions and castes, on every side And in our hearts lurks so much fear of death that one wonders whether there is any other place like this where people once conquered death but are now afraid of it There is no doubt that this is a result of long subjection, but one should not forget that it is also a cause of that subjection

Even the whole "death" we cannot bear to hear To mention death seems inauspicious to us Jnanadev had to say with great sorrow . 'The word death they cannot bear, they

weep when someone dies" And if someone dies, what lamentation, what loud outcry! Why, we think all this is a duty! We even go further and hire professional mourners to do the weeping for us Even when death approaches we do not tell the patient of it. Even if the physician has told us that the patient cannot live, we would still keep him in the dark about it The doctor himself does not speak plainly, he empties bottles of medicine into him so long as there is breath in the body If instead he were to tell the truth, give him the comfort of courage, and direct his thoughts towards God, what a real help it would be! But their fear is that under the shock this brittle pot might crack before its time But really, could this pot crack before the ordained moment? And besides, if this pot that was due to crack two hours hence should crack right now, what difference does it make? All this does not mean that one should become hard-hearted or loveless But attachment to the body is not love On the contrary, unless attachment to the body is put away, true love does not begin

When attachment to the body goes, then one realises that the body is an instrument for service, and then the body also finds its real support and receives the honour due to it But today we regard pampering the body as the sole purpose of our lives We have forgotten that life is to be lived for the fulfilment of *svadharma* One has to foster and cherish the body because only so can one perform one's *svadharma* The need is not just to satisfy the cravings of the palate It is all the same to the spoon whether you serve *halva* with it, or rice and *dal* It doesn't feel pleased in the one case or dissatisfied in the other The tongue too should be in the same happy position—it should, of course, have taste, but no pleasure or pain from it The body is to be paid its due hire—no more than that We have to use the *charkha* for spinning, so it is necessary to oil it In the same way, we get work out of the body, and we have to give it fuel If we were to use it in this way, the body, though it is nothing in itself, can gain value and find its roots in the spirit But instead of using the body as an instrument, we lose ourselves in it, and stunt our spirit Thus, the body, which already was of little intrinsic value, becomes even more worthless That is why the saints say firmly, "It is wrong to be attached to the body and

those related through the body, dogs and pigs too are worthy of affection This body and those related to you through this body—do not worship these alone, day and night, my friend, Learn to recognise others too as belonging to you " The saints teach us thus to grow Do we ever take anything of ourselves to anyone not a close relation or friend ? Do we ever do anything "to mingle soul with soul, to make self meet self ?" Do we let the swan of the spirit go outside this case and breathe free air ? Does it ever occur to you to break through your accepted circle and say to yourself, "I will make ten new friends tomorrow ?" Making fifteen friends today and fifty tomorrow, shall I one day feel that the whole world belongs to me, and I to the world ? We write letters to our relations from the jail, what is there so wonderful about that ? But would we write to a new friend released from prison—not a political prisoner but a thief ?

The self is impatient to pervade the world It wants to gobble up all creation But we shut it up in a cell We have made a prisoner of it We do not even remember that it exists From morning till evening we are busy minding the body Day and night we worry about how fat or how thin our bodies have become One would think that there was no other joy in the world Even beasts experience the pleasures of sense Will you not now taste the joy of giving away and of controlling the palate ? What joy there is in giving away a full plate of food to a hungry man, though you too suffer from hunger ! Taste the joy of this experience The mother, when she bears suffering for the sake of her child, knows something of this joy Even when a man draws a small circle and calls it "his own," the unconscious aim is to taste the joy of growth in the self, for thereby, the self bound in the body comes out for a little while But what sort of release is this ? It is like the prisoner coming out of his cell into the courtyard But this is not enough for the spirit The spirit wants the joy of unbounded freedom

The essence of the matter is —(1) The seeker after perfection (*sadhaka*) needs to leave the crooked ways of *adharma* (what is not one's dharma) and *paradharma* (someone else's *dharma*) and take the natural easy path of *svadharma*, he should never let go the motherly security of *svadharma* (2) The body perishes

every moment, understanding this, let him use it for the sake of *svadharma* When there is need let him not hesitate even to give it up for the sake of *svadharma* (3) Let him be constantly aware that the self is indestructible, all-pervasive, and let him remove from his heart the distinction of "mine" and "thine" The Lord tells us these basic principles of living The man who walks in the way shown by the Lord will one day, without doubt, experience "through this human body itself the blissful state of *sat-chit-ananda* "

(8) How to Achieve Both Renunciation of Fruit

The Lord has indeed told us the truths of life, but the work is not complete with the mere telling These principles enunciated in the *Gita* are found already in the *Upanishads* and *Smrtis* If the *Gita* merely repeated them, it would be no great distinction Its real merit is that it tells us how to bring these truths into practice It is in solving this great problem that the skill of the *Gita* consists

"*Yoga*" is the name of the art or process by which these principles can be put into practice in the actual living The word "*sankhya*" means principles or theory "*Yoga*" means art of well-doing Jnanadev bears witness "The art of living comes of itself to the *Yogis* " The *Gita* is full of both, *sankhya* and *yoga*, science and art, *sastra* and *kalaa* When science and art meet, life blossoms into beauty Mere science is a castle in the air One may understand the theory of music, but if one has not trained the voice and mastered the art of singing, then *nadabrahman* (God as sound) would not take shape for us. That is the reason why the Lord has taught not only the principles, but also the art of applying them What then is this art ? What is the art which enables one to realise the transience of the body and the indestructibility and wholeness of the spirit, and so to practise *svadharma* ?

Behind a man's action there are generally two types of attitude One is the assured feeling, "I shall enjoy the fruit of my action I have a right to it " On the contrary, there is a feeling, "If I am not to enjoy the fruit of my action, then I will not act at all " The *Gita* tells us of yet another attitude of mind or way of life, which says "You must of course act, but don't think that you have a right to the fruit " The man who acts has no doubt a right to the

fruit But give up this right of your own free will *Rajas* says, "If I accept the work, I deemed the fruit ' *Tamas* says, "If I give up the fruit, I shall give up work also " These two attitudes are like two brothers Therefore leave both behind and reach pure *sattvaguna* In other words, do the work, but give up the fruit, and giving up the fruit, do the work Before, or after, do not hanker after the fruit

"Don't hanker after the fruit," says the *Gita* But it also insist that you should act with full energy and skill. The action of the person who acts without desire should be much better than that of the person who acts with acts with desire This is only proper, for the latter is attracted to the fruit, and a part, much or little, of his time and attention will be spent on thoughts and dreams of the fruit But all the time and all the strength of the man who has no desire for the fruit is devoted to the action The river tasks do rest, the wind knows no fatigue, and the sun can only shine and shine for ever The disinterested doer, too, cannot but render unremitting service What action then can equal that of the man who thus always rejoices in action ? Also, balance of mind is itself a most noble quality, and this, one might say, is the patrimony of the disinterested doer If, in a work of art, besides dexterity and skill of hand, there is also mental poise, we see in it a greater beauty

Moreover, the difference between the distinterested worker and the worker with attachment is all to the advantage of the former The man of desires looks at an act with the eye of self-interest "The act is mine, and the fruit too is mine " Because of this, it does not appear to him a moral lapse if his attention strays a little from the work At most, it seems to him an error in execution But the worker without desire for the fruit feels in relation to his work a sense of moral duty So with concentration, he takes care that there is no shortcoming in his work His work is more flawless However you look at it, renunciation of fruit is the most effective and noble principle And so we may say that renunciation of fruit is *yoga*, the art of living

Leaving aside the matter of desireless action, there is in action a joy which you cannot find in the fruit While performing an action for its own sake, one's absorption in it is itself a stream of joy. If you said to an artist, "Don't paint pictures, I shall pay you for not painting," he would not agree If you said to the farmer,

"Don't go out into the fields, or graze your cattle, or lift water from your wells we will give you as much grain as you ask for," if he were a true farmer, he wouldn't like this arrangement The farmer goes into his fields early in the morning *Suryanarayana* (God as the sun) welcomes him The birds sing for him The cattle crowed around him He strockes their backs with affection He looks with loving eyes on the plants and trees that he has raised There is a pure, a *sattvik*, joy in these action And this joy itself is the foremost, the real fruit of action Weighed against this, the outer, the material fruit is quite secondary

By taking man's attention away from the fruit, the *Gita* multiplies a hundred-fold his concentration on his work The disinterested worker's concentration on his work is itself a kind of *samadhi* (an experience of oneness) It follows that his joy is many times greater than that of others If we look at it this way, it becomes at once clear that desireless action is itself a great reward Does not Jnandev ask, "The tree yields fruit Would you have the fruit yield further fruit ?" When this body, like a tree, has brought forth the beautiful fruit of disinterested pursuit of *svadharma*, why look for any other fruit ? Why should the farmer who has sown wheat, sell it and eat bread of millets ? Why grow bananas and, selling the fruit, buy chillies instead ? Eat what you sow, my brother But the world does not accept all this Though they have the good fortune to be able to live on bananas, they fling themselves on the chillies The *Gita* says, "Don't do this, but eat action itself, drink action itself, digest action itself " Everything else comes with performance of action A child plays for the joy of playing The benefit of exercise comes of its own accord But the child does not think of this benefit All his joy is in the playing

9 Renunciation of Fruit Two Examples

This joy in action, saints have illustrated in their lives Shivaji the king had great regard for Saint Tukaram Once he sent a palanquin to fetch Tukaram and made arrangements to receive him with honour But Tukaram was deeply distressed by these preparations He thought to himself, "Is this the reward for my devotion ? Is it for this that I worship God ?" It seemed to him as if the Lord, by placing this fruit of worldly honour in his hands, was pushing him away He said,

"You know my heart, do you wish to get rid of this trouble
from me? Wicked is this tick of yours, Pandurang!"

"My Lord, this plan of yours is far from good You are trying to put me away with a little red bead You perhaps think you can get rid of the brother in this way But, after all, I am not the disciple of such a poor teacher I shall cling to your feet and never let go Devotion is the *svadharma* of the devotee, and the art of his life is to see that the tree of devotion does not put forth branches bearing other fruit"

The life of Pundalik shows us an even more profound ideal of renunciation Pundalik looked after his parents and served them Being pleased with such service, the Lord Pandurang came sunning to greet him But Pundalik would be guiled by Pandurang, and refused to give up his duty of service Serving his father and mother was for him worship of God, true *bhakti* If a boy were to rob others and cherish his parents, or a patriot to be treacherous to other nations in his country's interests, the devotion of either could not be called *bhakti* It would be mere attachment Pundalik was not caught up in any such attachment to a form He thought to himself "This form that God has taken when he stands before me—is God only this? Was creation a corpse before He appeared in this form?" He said to God "Lord, you have come yourself to bless me with this vision This I understand But I believe in the doctrine of 'AND ALSO' I cannot accept that you alone are God To me, you are God AND my parents too are God Since I am engaged in their service, I am unable to give you my attention Please forgive me" So he pushed towards the Lord a brick for Him to stand on, and became absorbed again in his service to his parents Tukaram has taken up this occasion and says with great enthusian and wonder

'What mad love is this, that kept Vitthal waiting,
What brave folly to push a brick for Him to stand on!"

This doctrine of "AND" which Pundalik applied is start of the technique used for renuncitation of fruit If the absorption in work (*karma-samadhi*) of the man who has renuounced the fruit of action is deep, his outlook on life (*vrtti*) is broad, inclusive and balanced For this reason, he never falls into the tangle of conflicing philosophies, nor does he let go his own principles. He does

not raise controversies like those the Gita talks of—*Naanyadastiti vaadinah*—"Those who say that nothing else is," and 'Only this exists—there is no other" On the other hand, his humble but firm attitude is "This is true, AND that too is true But, for me, this is true"

Once a householder went to a *sadhu* and asked him, "In order to attain freedom (*moksha*), is it necessary to renounce the home ?" The *sadhu* said, "Surely not Look, since men like Janaka have lived in places and found freedom (*moksha*), where is the need for you to leave the home ?" Later, another man came and asked the *sadhu*, "Swamiji, can one attain *moksha* without leaving the home ?" Now the *sadhu* replied, "Whoever said so ? If one could stay at home and get *moksha*, were Suka and others, then, fools to renounce their homes ?" When later these two men met, a loud dispute arose One asserted, "The *sadhu* says we must renounce our homes " The other protested, "No, he says that it is unnecessary" Then both came to the *sadhu*, who said "You are both right The way is in accord with the attitude of mind, the answer follows the question One should leave one's home, one need not leave one's home—both are true" This is the doctrine of "AND ALSO"

From the example of Pundalik one can understand how far the renunciation of fruit can take one The temptation before Pundalik (the vision of the Lord) was much more subtle than the material temptation offered to Tukaram But he was not taken in even by that If he had been, he would have been lost So then, once one's way has been chosen, it should be pursued to the end, even if the vision of the Lord crosses the path The body exists for the fulfilment of a purpose The vision of God is always in our grasp, how could it escape us ?

"When my heart is steeped in the love of you, who now can take away from me the sense of oneness with all ?"

It is too attain such love (*bhakti*) that one is born When the *Gita* says, "*maa te sango astu akarmani*" (Do not be attached to inaction), the meaning of this extends thus far, that while you act you must not retain even *vasana* of *moksha*, the attachment to liberation or ultimate freedom from action Freedom from *vasana* is itself *moksha* What truck can *moksha* have with *vasana* ? When renunciation of fruit reaches this point, then the art of life has attained completeness and perfection, and shines like the full moon.

(10) The Ideal Teacher

The *sastra* and the *kalaa*, the science and the art, have both been exponded—but even after this, the whole picture does not stand clearly before our eyes Science is absolute and unqualified, art has quality, *sastra* is *nirguna*, *kalaa* is *saguna* But even a quality does not manifest itself to the eye, unless it assumes a form The *saguna*, if it is not given a form, may be as elusive as the absolute The way out of this difficulty is to behold the man in whom the quality has taken shape This is why Arjuna says, "Lord, you have faught me the most important truths of life, and the art by which these can be brought into practice. But the picture is not yet clear Will you not now illustrate them and show them in action ? Tell the marks by which one can know the man whose mind holds fast these principles, and whose every pulse spells out the *yoga* of renunciation Tell me about him whom we call the *sthitaprajna* (the steadfast seer), who shows us the profound depths of renunciation, who is absorbed in oneness with action (*karma-samadhi*), who is in firmness like the great Mount Meru How does he speak, how does he sit, how does he walk? What does he look like, how can one recognise him ? Will you not tell me all this, my Lord ?"

It is in answers to this entreaty that at the end of the Second Chapter, the Lord has drawn for us in eighteen *slokas* the heroic and sublime character of the *sthitaparajna* In these eighteen *slokas* he has distilled the essence of the eighteen chapters of the *Gita* The *sthitaprajna* is the ideal character of the *Gita* Even the phrase *sthitaprajna* is the *Gita's* own Later, the *Gita* describes other figures in the same way—the *jivan mukata* (the liberated one) in the Fifth Chapter, the *bhakta* (the devotee) in the Twelfth, the *gunatita* (one who has transcended differences) in the Fourteenth, and the *jnananishtha* (one steadfast in *jnana*) in the Eighteenth But the description of the *sthitaprajna* is more detailed and revealing than the others Here, side by side with the marks of the *siddha*, the perfect one, we are also told of the qualities of the *sadhaka*, the seeker after perfection Thousands of satyagrahis, men and women, recount these qualities in their eveding prayers If they could reach every village and every house, what a happy thing it would be but, assuredly, if they dweel in our hearts they would, of their own accord, spread outwards If what we recite every day becomes mechanical repetition, then instead of impressing itself

on the mind, it will fade out This, however, is not the fault of constant repetion, but of not thinking about it Along with constant pepetition, constant meditation and self-examination are necessary

The *sthitaprajna* is the man of steadfast mind—the very name proclaims it But how can the mind be steadfast without self-control? So the *sthitaprajna* is said to be the embodiment of self-control The mind being fixed in the self (*atman*) and controlling the *indriyas* (the organs of perception and action)—this is self-control The *sthitaprajna* reins in the *indriyas* and gudies them into *karma-yoga*, the way of action To vary the image, using his *indriyas* as oxen, he ploughs well and cultivates the field of the disinterested performance of *svadharma* Every breath of his is used in this higher pursuit

This control of the *indiryas* is not easy Perhaps, in a way, it might be easy not to use one's *indiyas* at all Silence and fasting are not so difficult The opposite, to leave one's *indriyas* free, of course comes easy to everybody But to do as the tortoise does drawing in its limbs in times of danger, and using them when it is safe, to draw the senses away from objects, and to use them aright for higher services—this discipline is difficult For this, great effort and much wisdom are needed Even with all this, it is doubtful whether we shall reach the goal Are we then to despair? No, the *sadhaka* (the seeker after perfection) should never lose hope If after trying all the techniques of his *sadhana*, something is still lacking then let him call in faith, *bhakti* The Lord has given us this very valuable advice in the course of his picture of the *sthitaprajna* Yes, he has given it in a few picked words. But these few words are more valuable than cartloads of explanation, for *bhakti* has been brought in when the need for it is greatest We shall not here go into the qualities of the *sthitaprajna* in detail But I draw attention to it now, lest we should forget the essential place assigned to *bhakti* in all our *sadhana* Only God knows who in this world is a perfect *sthitaprajna* but the figure of Pundalik always comes before my eyes as the example of the *sthitaprajna* who is utterly given over to service—and that I have placed before you

Well, now the qualities of the *sthitaprajna* are complete

Niraguna +	*Saguna*	+ The embodiment
(Theory)	(Art and practice)	(The steadfast seer)
(*Sankhyabuddhi*)	(*Yogabuddhi*)	(*Sthitaprajna*)

together
complete the science
of life

What order fruit but *barhma-nirvana*, Liberation, can this tree yield ?

III

THE YOGA OF ACTION

(11) The Infinite Gains of Renunciation of Fruit

Brothers, in the Second Chapter, we glanced over the whole of the philosophy of life Now, in the Third Chapter, we shall explain this philosophy more clearly We began by considering principles, now we shall go into detail In the previous Chapter we discussed *karma-yoga* (the way of action) The great thing in *karma-yoga* is giving up the fruit of one's actions Yes, in *karma-yoga* one surrenders the fruit, but the question arises Does the fruit come to one, nevertheless, or does it not ? Thus the Third Chapter says that the *karma-yogi*, by giving up the fruit of his action, does not lose it, but paradoxically enough gains it in infinite measure

Here one is reminded of the story of Lakshmi (the goddess of prosperity) It was her *svayamvara* (the day when she was to choose her husband) All the *devas* and *danavas* had come with hopes raised high, Lakshmi had not proclaimed here vow before She came into the assembly and said, "I shall garland only the man who has no desire for me " But then, they were all greedly people

So Lakshmi began to search for the desireless one whom she could choose Now there appeared before her the form of Lord Vishnu lying peacefully on the serpent, Sesha She put the wedding garland round His neck and to this day he sits there, stroking His feet *Ramaa* (the goodess of beauty) becomes the slave of him who does not hanker after her That is the wonder of it

The ordinary man puts up a bristling hedge around his fruits, but by doing so, he loses the infinite fruit that should have been his The worldly man, after endlesss toil, receives a small reward, but the *karma-yogi*, though he may do little, receives immense benifit The difference is due only to a *bhavana* (an inward attitude) Tolstoy says somewhere People talk a lot about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, but no one knows how much the world's man runs about every day of his life and grows dry within ! He carries on his back the burden of two donkeys and capers about Is not his suffering much greater, his plight far worse, than Jesus Christ's ?

The worldly people also do much penance, but it is in pursuit of low aims We reap what we sow, as is the desire, so is the fruit The world will not pay more for our wares than the price we ourselves mark on them Sudama went to the Lord Krishna with a gift of flattened rice The handful of rice may not be worth even a pie, but to Sudama it seemed beyond price, for his devotion went with it It was charmed rice Every grain of it was charged with his love However cheap a thing may be, the *mantra*, the charm, increases its value, its power What, after all, is the weight of a currency note? If we burn it, we might, perhaps, be able to warm a drop of water But the stamp on it gives it its value

This is the whole beauty of *karma-yoga* also Action is like the currency note Its value is that of the *bhavana* (the feeling behind it), the stamp it bears, not that of the *karma* or outward action, the piece of paper In a way, what I am telling you is the secret of image-worship itself There is great beauty in the idea of worshipping an image Who can break this image? This image, in the beginning, was merely a piece of stone I put life into it I filled it with *bhavana*, my feeling How can anyone destory my feeling? Stones can be smashed, but not feelings When I withdraw my feelings from the image, then what remains will be mere stone, a thing which anyone can break to pieces

In other words, then, action is a piece of stone, or a piece of

paper My mother scribbled three or four lines on a piece of paper and sent it off to me, another gentlemen sent me a long discursive fifty-page Now, which is more weighty ? But the feeling in my mother's faw lines is beyond measure, it is sacred The other stuff cannot stand comparison with it Action must be moistened with love, filled with felling (*bhavana*) We set a price on the labourer's work, and pay him his due wages But a ritual gift (*dakshina*) is not given like that One sprinkles water on the *dakashina*, before giving it away.

Here, one does not ask how much is given The important question is whether it was moistened or not,—whether there was love in it or not There is an entertaining passage in the *Manus-mrti* A student lived twelve years in his Master's house He went there an animal, and came out a man Now what fee was he to give his Master? In olden days, the fees were not collected in advance After studying for twelve years, one gate the teacher what was proper Manu says, 'Give the Master one or two leaves and flowers, a fan or a pair of sandals, or a water-pot " Don't think this is a joke, for whatever is to be given, should be given with the knowledge that it is a symbol of faith What, after all, is the weight of a flower ? But in the eyes of devotion, it is equal to all creation 'With a single leaf of *tulasi*, Rukmini weighed Giridhar, the Lord who lifted up a mountain " Satya-bhama's ponderous jewellery was of no avail But when mother Rukmini laid a *tulasi* leaf, filled with devotion, on the scale, the thing was done The *tulasi* leaf was charged with magic It was no longer a common leaf This is true of the action of the *karma-yogi* too

Suppose two men go for a bath in the Ganga One of them says, "What is this Ganga that people talk so much about ? Take two parts of hydrogen and one of oxygen, combine the two gases —it becomes Ganga What else is there in the Ganga?" The other says, "The Ganga flows from the lovely lotus-feet of Lord Vishnu She has dwelt in the matted hair of Siva Thousands of seers, both ascetic and kingly have done penance near her Countless holy act have been performed by her side Sueh is the sacred Ganga, my mother " Filled with this *bhavana* (teeling), he bathes in the river The oxygen-hydrogen- *wallah* also bathes Both derive the bene-fit of physical cleansing But the devotee (*bhakta*) gets the benifit of mental purification as well Even a buffalo, if it bathes in the

Ganga, will achieve physical cleanliness The dirt of the body will go But how wash the mind of its taint? One got the slight benefit of physical cleanliness, the other, in addition, gained the invaluable fruit of inward purity

When, after bathing, a man performs *Suryanamaskar* (a strenuous form of Sun worship), he will, of course, get the benefit of physical exercise It is not for the sake of bodily health that he performs *Suryanamaskar*, but he does it as worship (*upasana*) Of course he gains good health, but the brightness of his intellect also increases While he grows healthier, God as the Sun (*Suryanarayan*) also grants him greater awareness and imaginative power

The action is the same, but a distinction arises from the difference in *bhavana* (in the inward attitude) The action of the man who seeks spiritual good opens out the soul the action of the worldly man serves to bind it If the *karma-yogi* is a farmer, he will till the land, considering it his *svadharma* His stomach will of course be filled, but he does not work for filling his stomach He looks upon food as a means by which he keeps his body fit for the task of tilling the land The end is *svadharma* and food is the means But to the farmer who is not a *karma-yogi*, filling his stomach is the end, and his *svadharma*, farming, is the means The two attitudes are thus opposed to each other

In describing the qualities of the *sthitaprajna* (the steadfast seer) in the Second Chapter, this distinction has been brought out in a striking way When others are awake, the *karma-yogi* is asleep, and when others are asleep, the *karma-yogi* is awake Just as we take good care to keep our stomach filled, the *karma-yogi* is watchful lest even one moment should slip past without action If he too eats, it is out of necessity Because there is no help for it, he puts some food into his stomach The worldly man finds joy in eating, the *yogi* finds it a hardship So he does not take pleasure in every morsel, as he tastes it He eats with self-restraint The night of the one is the day of the other, and the day of the one is the night of the other In other words, the thing in which one finds joy, in it the other finds pain, and *vice versa* Though the actions of the worldly man and the *karma-yogi* look alike, the *karma-yogi's* distinction is that he has given up attachment to the fruit of his action, and finds joy in the action itself The *yogi*, like the worldly man eats, drinks, sleeps But his *bhavana*, his attitude to these actions, is different That is

why, though there are sixteen chapters of the *Gita* left, still, at the very beginning, the figure of the steadfast seer, the *sthitaprajna*, the embodiment of self-control, is placed before us

The similarity and the difference between the actions of the worldly man and those of the *karma-yogi* are immediately apparent Suppose the *karma-yogi* is engaged in the care of cows With what outlook does he do it? His *bhavana* (attitude) is that, by his service to the cows, society will get its fill of milk, and that, through the cow, he will forge for himself a link of love with the lower orders of creation He does not do it for his wages The wages come to him all right, but the real joy and pleasure are in this pure *bhavana*, this spiritual outlook

The *karma-yogi's* action units him with all creation If we will not eat without first watering the *tulasi* plant, we create, by this resolve, a bond of love between ourselves and the vegetable kingdom How can I eat, while leaving the *tulasi* hungry? Learning in this way to identify ourselves with the cow and the *tulasi*, we must attain oneness with the whole universe In the Mahabharata war, everybody, at sunset, leaves the field for evening prayer, but Lord Krishna unyokes the horses from the chariot, gives them water, rubs them down, removes the burrs from their bodies What joy the Lord finds in this service! In describing this, the poet knows no weariness Picture it to yourself The Lord Parthasarathi (the Lord as Arjuna's charioteer) feeds the horses from his yellow silk (*pitambar*), which he has filled with gram And thus you will experience in imagination the joy of *karma-yoga* Take it that every act is a noble, spiritual, consecrated act Take khadi work itself Does the man who hawks khadi in the streets, with a bundle on his back, never get tired? No, because he is absorbed in the thought that he has to feed the millions of his brothers and sisters in this country who are naked and starving Selling this yard of khadi makes him one with *Darıdramarayana* (God in the form of the poor)

(12) Varied Benefits of Karma-Yoga

In the *yoga* of desireless action, there is a miraculous power By such action, both the individual and society are richly blessed The life of the man who follows his *svadharma* runs the even

tenor of its course But, because he is always absorbed in action, his body keeps pure and healthy And, as a result of his action, the society in which he lives prospers too The *karma yogi* farmer will not cultivate opium or tobacco just because it will fetch a lot of money, for he has related his work to the welfare of society Action done as *svadharma* confers nothing but benefit on the community The trader who believes that his business is for the good of society will never deal in foreign fineries His business advances the welfare of society The *karma-yogi* forgets himself and lives in identity with the community around him Any society into which such *karma-yogis* are born will maintain order, prosperity and goodwill

The result of the *karma-yogi's* action is that while his life goes on smoothly, his body and mind are radiant, and society too prospers Besides these two benefits, he also receives the great gift of *chitta-suddhi*, purity of mind "Purity through action," it is called Action is a means to inward purity, but not the routine action of everybody What brings about inward purity is the "charged" action of the *karma-yogi* The *Mahabharata* tells the story of the merchant Tuladhar (the balance-holder) A *brahman* called Jajali goes to him to find true knowledge Tuladhar says to him, "Brother, it is necessary to keep the beam of this balance always even " By constantly doing this external action, Tuladhar's mind too had become straight and sensitive Whether a child comes into the shop, or a grown-up person, his beam remains level for all, leaning neither this why nor that. One's action transforms one's mind The *karma-yogi's* work is a form of prayer (*japa*) His mind is purified by it, and the clear mind receives the image of *jnana*, true knowledge Through his many separate actions, the *karma-yogi*, in the end, attains true knowledge From the arm of the balance Tuladhar got mental poise As Sena, the barber, cleaned other people's heads, wisdom came to him "Look, I remove the dirt from others' heads, but have I ever removed the dirt from my own head, from my own mind ?' The language of the spirit came to him through his work As the weeds his field, the *karma-yogi* gets the idea of removing the weeds of habit and passion from his heart Gora the potter kneads and moulds the raw clay and gives baked pots to the people, from this he learns the lesson that his own life too is a pot that needs to be baked He can test with his fingers if a pot

is baked or raw, he thus becomes a judge of saintliness From this it is evident that the *karma-yogi*, through the terms of his own trade or occupation, gains knowledge of perfection What was their trade but a school of the spirit ? These actions of theirs were nothing but worship, nothing but service Viewed from without, these actions looked worldly, but inwardly, in reality, they were spiritual

Another great benefit flows from the actions of the *karma-yogi* Society has before it an ideal In a community, it happens that one man is born before and another after It becomes the responsibility of the one who was born earlier to set an example to those who come later It is the responsibility of the elder brother to the younger brother, of the parent to the children, of the leader to his followers, of the teacher to his pupils, to set an example through his actions And who but the *karma-yogi* is unceasingly devoted to his work, for in work only he sees joy Thus false vanity loses ground in society Though the *karma-yogi* is contented within himself, he cannot live at all without work Tukaram says, "What if I have found God by singing his praises, by *bhajan* ? Should I, therefore, give up my *bhajan* ? After all, *bhajan* has now become my nature "

"Having first kept good company,
Tuka became Pandurang
Why break the thread of *bhajan* ?
Why change one's very nature ?"

The *karma-yogi* has climbed up the steps of the action and reached the top, but he does not even then lift his foot off the step He cannot shake off action Work has become second nature to his limbs In this way he continues to show to society the great use and value of the steps—of service through performing *svadharma*

It is indeed a great thing to rid society of falsehood Through hypocrisy and deceit, society decays If the *jnani*, the man of wisdom, were to sit in silence, others too would follow his example and sit with folded hands The *jnani*, with eternal contentment, loses himself in inner happiness, and remains quiet, but the other, though inwardly weeping, becomes inactive One is at rest because he is happy at heart, the other too is at rest

though his mind is shrunken ! This state is terrifying It encourages vanity and hypocrisy That is why all the saints, even after reaching the heights, have with good reason held on to the means, the apronstrings of action, have kept on performing their *karma* till death The mother delights in her children's games with their dolls Though she knows that it is only make-believe, she joins in and creates in the children interest in the game If she takes no part, the children would find no fun in it If the *karmayogi*, because he is contented, gives up action, others, even though they have the need for it, will also give up action and therefore remain with hungry, joyless hearts

Therefore the *karmayogi*, like the ordinary man, goes on working He does not think that he is in any way an exceptional person He exerts himself infinitely more than other men It is not necessary to put a stamp on any action and mark it as spiritual There is no need to advertise one's action If you are a perfect *brahmachari* (a seeker of the real), then let your actions show a hundred times more zest than other men's Even though you get less food, do much more work, let society get more out of you Let your *brahmacharya* be seen in your conduct and dealings, as the fragrance of sandal spreads far and wide

The essence of the matter is that the *karmayogi*, by surrendering the desire for fruit, receives an infinite reward His life proceeds evenly He is radiant in body and mind The society in which he moves is happy He attains inward purity and also *jnana* And society being rid of hypocrisy and deceit, the ideal of a perfect life comes within our reach This, experience proves, is the greatness of *karma yoga*

(13) Obstacles in the Course of Karma Yoga

The *karma yogi* does his work much better than others, because work to him is prayer, worship, ritual, work itself is a mode of worship (*puja*) I performed *puja* After the *puja* I received the food offered during the worship, as *prasada* (a token of grace) But is this the reward, the payment for my *puja* ? If a man performs *puja* for the sake of the food, he will of course get immediately this part of *prasada* But through the act of *puja*, the *karma yogi* seeks to get the reward of the vision of God He does not estimate his action so cheap that it can merely fetch him a portion of the food offering He is not prepared to mark

such a low price on his action He does not apply such gross measure to his actions When a man's outlook is gross, the fruit he receives will also be gross There is a proverb among farmers—"Sow deep, but sow moist ' It is not enough to sow deep, there must be moisture in the soil too With both depth and moisture in the soil, the yield will be enormous So, the action should be "deep." i e , well-cultivated And, it should also be moist with the love of God, with a sense of dedication The *karma-yogi's* actions are sown deep, and surrendered to God

We have developed some absurd ideas about the spirit People imagine that once a man has become spiritual, there is no more need for him to move hand or foot, or do any work. They say, "What sort of religious man is this, who ploughs the fields and weaves *khadi* ?" But nobody asks how a spiritual man can eat food The God of the *karma-yogi* brushes down horses. At the Pandavas' *Rajasuya* sacrifice He clears the leaf plates after the feast He goes out into the forest to graze cows If the Lord of Dvaraka went back to Gokul again, He would tend cows, playing on His flute So the saints have pictured a *karma-yogi* God who rubs horses down, takes cows out to graze, drives a chariot, cleans dishes and mops up floors And they themselves have done the work of a tailor, or a potter, or a weaver, or a gardener, or a trader, or a barber or a cobbler Doing these things, they have found themselves and become free

People slip from the religious observance of *karma-yoga* for two reasons In this connection, we must remember the specific nature of our *indriyas* Our senses are caught up in dualities, such as likes and dislikes For the things we want we feel an attachment, or fondness, and an aversion for other things. Thus, attachment and aversion, desire and anger, gnaw into a man and eat him up How noble, how beautiful, how infinitely rewarding *karma-yoga* is ! But desire and anger tie round our necks this perpetual rattle, "Take this, and leave that," and we trail this behind us day and night That is why, at the end of this Chapter, the Lord rings the warning bell, so that we may shake off this encumbrance and save oursIves The *karma-yogi* should become, like the *sthitaprajna*, an embodiment of self-control.

IV

VIKARMA—THE KEY TO KARMA-YOGA

(14) How Vikarma Helps Karma

In the last Section we discussed the *yoga* of desireless action If we give up our *svadharma* (one's own *dharma*) and take over another's *dharma*, it is quite impossible to attain the goal of desirelessness It is the merchant's *svadharma* to sell wholesome and necessary goods But when he gives up his *svadharma* and starts selling luxuries got from across the seven seas, the motive is mercenary How then can that action be free from desire ? Cherishing one's *svadharma* is, therefore, indispensable, if one is to free one's action from desire But even the pursuit of *svadharma* can be full of desire Let us take even the matter of non-violence (*ahimsa*) To the devotee of non-violence, violence is of course unthinkable But it is possible to be non-violent in externals, and yet in fact be filled with violence, for violence is a quality of the mind It is not as if by abstaining from violent action outwardly, the mind becomes full of non-violence Drawing the sword proclaims the attitude of violence, but it is not true that by dropping the sword a man becomes non-violent The practice of *svadharma* is exactly like this To be free of desire, it is essential to keep clear of others' *dharma* But this is only the first step towards freedom from desire With this alone, we have not reached the goal

Desirelessness, too, is a quality of the mind As a means of creating this, the pursuit of *svadharma* is not enough, other aids are needed To light a lamp, one needs not only the oil and the wick, but a flame When the lamp is lit, the darkness disappears How is this lamp to be lit ? For this, we need to purify the mind By self-examination, we have to cleanse the mind of its dirt At the end of the Third Section, the Lord spoke of this important matter, and from it the Fourth Section takes its origin

In the *Gita*, the word "*karma*" (action) is used in the sense of *svadharma* Our eating, drinking, sleeping, are all actions, but it is not these actions that the *Gita* refers to when it talks of *karma* *Karma* there means the practice of *svadharma* But in order to achieve freedom from desire through the practice of *svadharma*, something more is necessary—victory over *karma* and *krodha*, craving and anger As long as the mind is not as pure

and peaceful as the waters of the Ganga, desirelessness will not come to us These actions performed to purify the mind, the *Gita* calls "*vikarma* " The three words, "*karma*," "*vikarma*", and "*akarma*," occurring in the Fourth Section, are of the utmost importance *Karma* is the concrete, outward action performed as *svadharma* The participation of the *chitta*, the mind and heart, in this external action is "*vikarma*." We bow our heads to someone, but if, while we are doing this, the heart too does not now, the external act is meaningless The inner and the outer must become one. I worship the *Siva-linga*, perform *abhisheka*, by bathing it in a continuous stream of water But if, as I do this, the stream of my meditation too is not unbroken, what is the value of this ritual ? Then the *Siva-linga* is a stone, and I am another It only means that two stones confront each other. The *yoga* of desireless action is achieved only when the outward action is combined with the purity of the mind within

When we say "desireless action," the word "desireless" is more significant than the word "action", just as in "non-violent non-co-operation," the adjective "non-violent" is more important than "non-co-operation " If we leave out the non-violence and hold on to the non-co-operation, it could become a terrible thing In the same way, if the *vikarma* of the mind does not enter into the performance of *svadharma*, it would be a mockery

The people who do social service today are only performing their *svadharma* To serve people who are poor or lame, or are unhappy and in difficulties, and to make them happy, is the *dharma* that falls to us in the ordinary course But we should not therefore conclude that all social workers have become *karma-yogis* If the attitude of mind (*bhavana*) in social service is not pure, it can become a terrifying thing All the egotism, the hatred and envy, the self-seeking and other distortions that we develop in serving our own families, all this we develop too in social service We see with our own eyes how this happens, in the conflicts of social service organisations today

(15) Karma + Vikarma = Akarma

The mind must stand united with the action, this application of the mind, the *Gita* calls "*vikarma* " There is the common action, which is outwardly one's *svadharma*, and there is the special inward action This special action varies with the needs

of each individual mind Many kinds of *vikarma*, with typical examples, are given in the Fourth Section These, the *Gita* develops from the Sixth Section onwards Only when we perform this special *karma*, when we unite the mind with outward action, does the light of desirelessness shine in it When *vikarma*, the action of the mind and heart, enters into *karma*, the outward action, desirelessness grows within us, little by little As long as the body and the mind remain separate, each has its own distinct means of growth When we bring them together, the goal is within our reach Lest the body and the mind should go different ways, the great moralists have shown a two-fold path—in *bhakti-yoga* (the way of devotion) they mention penance (*tapas*) without and meditation (*japa*) within When inwardly, the mind does not meditate, outward forms of penance, like fasting, are entirely wasted While doing penance, the inward flame, the *bhavana*, should constantly burn and shine The very meaning of the word "*upa-vasa*" (fasting) is "to dwell close to God " It is in order that our minds and hearts may stay near God that we have to close the doors against the pleasures of the senses But if we give up the pleasures of the senses and do not think of God, of what value is the physical act of fasting ? If instead of thinking of God, we think of things to eat and drink, the fast would be more fearful than a feast ! There is nothing as terrible as this mental feasting, as thinking about pleasures *Tantra* must be accompanied by *mantra*, action by meditation Action as such has no value, nor mere meditation without action The hand and the heart must work together to render true service

If the outward action is not moistend by the heart's affection, then the performance of *svadharma* would remain barren, it would not bear the flower and the fruit of desirelessness Suppose we are nursing a sick man If in such service to the sick, there is no compassion, it would become dull and disgusting to us, and a burden instead of a relief to the patient Moreover, where the heart is not engaged, egoism too would show its head We would entertain expectations like this "I served him today He should serve me at my need, he should admire and praise me " Or else, we get fed up and say, "I do so much for him, and yet he keeps complaining " Sick men are usually peevish—and those who nurse them without the true spirit or service will only be disgusted by this

When the inner feeling goes with the action, the latter is transformed into something unique When the flame is applied to the wick in the oil, light is born When *vikarma* is applied to *karma*, desirelessness comes into being When a spark touches the gunpowder, it explodes A power is, released from the gunpowder The mere act, the *karma*, is like powder, which has to be activated by the fire feeling, *vikarma* The power that *karma* develops at the touch of *vikarma* is indescribable A pinch of lifeless powder in one's pocket blows up a whole body when a spark lights on it In the same way, the infinite power of the practice of *svadharma* lies latent. Touch it with *vikarma*, and see what work it can do ! In the resulting explosion desire and anger are destroyed, and the way made clear for the attainment of supreme wisdom

Action (*karma*) is thus the wick of the lamp of knowledge (*jnana*) There is a log of wood lying somewhere, when you set fire to it, it becomes a mass of glowing embers What a difference between that wood and this fire ! But it is the wood that has become this fire When you apply *vikarma* to *karma*, the latter begins to acquire divine radiance The mother strokes her child's back. A hand moves up and down a back, and no more But who can describe the feelings arising in the hearts of the mother and the child from this commonplace action ? But if you frame an equation that if, on a back of such length and such breadth, a hand of such weight and such softness is moved, so much joy will result, it would be absurdly comic The action of the moving hand is quite insignificant—but the mother has poured her heart into it, she has added *vikrama* to it It is this that causes the thrill of joy There is a situation in Tulasi's *Ramayana* The monkeys were returning from a battle with the *rakshasas*, with their bodies wounded and bleeding But when Rama's loving look rested on them for a moment, all their pain vanished Now, if someone else had taken a photograph of Rama's eyes and look at that moment, and carefully opened out his own eyes in the same way, could this have the same power ? The very attempt would be ridiculous

When *vikarma* is combined with *karma*, a power is released which results in *akarma* (inaction in action) The huge log of wood burns and becomes a handful of ashes, with which we can joyfully smear our bodies In the same way, the fire of *vikarma* reduces *karma* to the ashes of *akarma* What is the relation

between the wood and the ash ? "*Kah kena sambandhah ?*" (What is the relation, and with what ?) They have no common properties, and yet there is no doubt that the ash came from the wood

Now, what do we mean by saying that, by pouring *vikarma* into *karma*, it become *akarma* ? We mean that, while acting, we seem not to act, we are not feel the burden of action Though we act, we are not the doer The *Gita* says, that though you have slain, you are not the slayer The mother beats her child, if you try doing the same, the child will not stand it But when the mother beats her child, he still goes back to her and hides his face in her lap—for there is *chitta-suddhi*, purity of heart, behind the mother's outwardly harsh action Her punishment of the child was disinterested It had no selfish motive By *vikarma*, by inner purity, *karma* ceases to be *karma* That look of Rama's because of inward *vikarma*, had become a mighty ocean of the healing of love, but the action cost Rama no effort An action performed with pure heart does not attach itself to us It leaves no residue of sin or merit, *punya* or *papa*, else, what a heavy pressure of action would our hearts and minds have to bear ! If the news gets abrod at 2 o'clock today, that all political prisoners are to released tomorrow, people gather together from all sides, and what confusion, what tumult! The problem of morality, the goodness and badness of actions, distracts us We feel that action crowds in on us from all sides, we feel that it has caught us by the throat Just as the waves of the sea dash with force against the land and make channels into it, the complexity of action (*karma*) enters the mind and agitates it The quality of pleasure and pain, *sukha* and *duhkha*, develops, all peace is lost The action takes place, and is over, but its force remains behind Action corrupts the mind, and destroys sleep

But if, with *karma*, we combine *vikarma*, then, however much work you do, you will not feel its strain The mind becomes still, steady and radiant, like the pole-star When you put *vikarma* into *karma*, it becomes *akarma*, it is as if you wrote *karma* on a slate, and then rubbed it out

(16) The Art of Akarma—Learn it from the Saints

How does *karma* become *akarma*—how does action become inactivity and inactivity become action? From whom can we learn

this art? From the saints, of course At the end of the Fourth Section, the Lord says, ' Go to the saints and learn from them " In describing how *karma* become *akarma*, the powers of language are exhausted To see it fully, we have to sit at the feet of the saints The Lord is pictured as *saantaakaaram bhujagasayanam*" —he is asleep and at rest on the coiled power of Sesha, the thousand-headed serpent In the same way, the saints, though engaged in a thousand actions, do not allow a ripple to arise in the still waters of their mind One can never understand this miracle until one goes to a saint and sees it

Now-a-days books have become very cheap. For an anna or two, one can get books like the *Gita* and "*Manache Slok*" (a Marathi book by Samarth Ramdas) And of *gurus* there is no lack Education too is widely spread and cost little Universities seem to distribute knowledge in neat little packets But no one seems to be satisfied with feeding on this nectar of knowledge. The more one looks at this mountain of books, the more one realises how necessary it is to serve the saints It looks as though wisdom is held fast within the thick binding of these books, and cannot come out On such occasions I am reminded of a Marathi *abhang* —

> In front of me stand the high mountains of craving and anger
> Far, far beyond them is the Infinite

Beyond the high mountains of craving and anger dwells the Lord Narayana In the same way, behind these bookheaps, the King of Knowledge sits hidden Though surrounded by libraries and reading rooms, man everywhere still remains a monkey without culture or knowledge Once in a big library in Baroda, a gentlemen was taking out a fat volume with pictures in it He thought it was in English I asked him what book it was, and he thrust it forward I said, "But this is French," and he replied, "So it has turned out to be a French book, has it? So you know French, do you?" Clear Roman letters, fine pictures, and a beautiful binding—isn't this knowledge enough ?

In English alone, tens of thousands of books are published every year You may take it that this is so in other languages too Though knowledge spreads so rapidly, how does man's mind

manage to remain still empty? One man says that human memory is getting weaker, another, that men are losing the power of concentration, still another that whatever he reads seems true to him, and he cannot discriminate, yet another declares, "My dear Sir, I have no time to think " The Lord Krishna says, "Arjuna, you have been listening to far too many things, and your mind is dazed Till it gets steady, you will not see the way clearly Stop reading book and listening to people and now take sanctuary with the saints There you can read the book of life " There, as Sankaracharya says of the Lord Dakshinamurti, "The *guru's* speech is silence, the disciples, freed from doubt " By going there you will understand how utterly serene the mind can be while performing continuous service, you will understand how, though action rages without, the heart can be turned to produce unbroken music

V

THE TWO ASPECTS OF AKARMA--YOGA AND SANNYASA

(17) Outward Action—A Mirror of the Mind

The world's ways are terrible *Samsara*, life in the world, has been compared to an ocean In the ocean, wherever you look, you see nothing but water, *samsara*, too, is like that It surrounds you on all sides If one gives up hearth and home and takes up public service, there too he finds that the same *samsara* pitches its tent in his mind and occupies it If one goes and sits in a cave, one's palm's width lion-cloth is the warp and woof of *samsara* The lion-cloth becomes for him the essence of all possessiveness. Just as a little currency-note holds a thousand rupees, the little piece of cloth holds boundless attachment Because one renounces one's family, narrows one's circle, *samsara* has not therefore relaxed its hold on one, by reducing one's possessions, one does not reduce one's possessiveness Whether you say 10/25 or 2/5, it means the same Whether at home or in the forest, attachment is ever with us The pressure of *samsara* is no lighter If two *yogis* went and dwelt in the caves of the Himalayas, even there, if one comes to hear of the other's fame, he burns with envy Even in the field of public service, one sees the same thing.

The universe of *samsara* pursues us in such a way that, even

when we live within the bounds of *svadharma*, it never lets us go. Though one has given up all distracting activities and complications, and has retained *samsara* only in name, one still remains filled with possessiveness, *mamatva* *Samsara*, like any *rakshasa* (demon), can assume a larger or smaller form Big or small, a *rakshasa* is a *rakshasa* What is inescapable is the same wherever you are, in a palace or in a hut. Even if, with the hoops of *savadharma*, you bind the bale of *samsara*, and keep it of uniform weight, them too all sorts of troubles arise, and you become disgusted Even in your *svadharma* you will get entangled with persons and institutions, and will exclaim, "How did I get into this mess ?" But only then is your mind tested on the touchstone Merely by making one's own the practice of *svadharma*, one does not become untouched by *samsara* Reducing the area of one's activity is not the same as being unattached

How then can we achieve detachment? We should put into the effort the whole of our mind Without the mind's help, nothing can succeed We see how a boy whose parents have sent him to a school where he gets up early in the morning, drinks no tea and performs *suryanamaskar* (Sunworship with its rhythmic exercises), goes back home and, in a few days, reverts to his old habits A man is not a lump of clay If we wish to give a certain shape to his mind, after all, the mind must receive it If the mind does not accept it, then we have to admit that all this education from without is useless So, in the process of growth, the co-operation of the mind is essential

As a means of growth, external action, the performance of *savdharma*, and the inward attitude of the mind, *vikarma*, both are needed The external action is of course necessary If you do not act, you cannot test your mind In the stillness of early morning, our minds seem perfectly calm—but the moment a child cries, we see what our peace of mind is really worth So we achieve little by rejecting action External actions reveal the real quality of our minds The surface of the water is clear, but throw a stone into it, and at once the mud rises up Our minds are just like that At the bottom of the still lake, there is knee-deep mud It is only when an object from without touches it that one can see it. We say in our languages, "Anger has come to a man " Did that anger come from without? No, it was within-else it could never show itself

People say that they prefer coloured khadi to white, because

"coloured khadi doesn't get dirty" But that too gets dirty, only, dirt does not show on coloured khadi, while it shows up on white It cries out, "I am dirty, wash me, please" People do not like khadi that tells tales Our *karma* (action), too, talks It proclaims that we are given to anger, or selfishness, or something else *Karma* is the mirror which shows us our true form We should, therefore, be grateful to *karma* Would we smash a mirror because it shows us a dirty, ugly face? On the contrary, we should thank it and go and wash our face, and come back and look at ourselves in the mirror Similarly, if through *karma* the defects and weaknesses of our mind come out, should we then wish to avoid *karma*? Will our minds become pure by our turning away from *karma*? So let us continue to act, and make progressive efforts to make the mind pure

A man goes and sits in a cave, cut off from all human contact He imagines that he has attained perfect calm of mind But let him leave the cove and go out to beg for his food A mischievous little boy rattles the bolt of a door, and is absorbed in contemplating the noise it makes, but the *yogi* cannot bear the music that the innocent child makes and enjoys By living in a cave, he has made his mind so weak that he cannot stand the slightest jolt A little rattling noise shatters his peace of mind It is not good that one's mind should be in such a weak state

Which means *karma* is a very useful thing to enable us to understood what our minds are like When defects come to light, we can get rid of them If they are hidden from sight, progress is obstructed and growth comes to an end When we act and discover our own defects, we are impelled to employ *vikarma* to remove them When this effort of *vikarma* goes on day and night within, then we small learn in due time how, while performing *svadharma*, one can remain unattached, and get beyond *kama* and *krodha* (craving and anger), *lobha* and *moha* (greed and delusion) If we endeavour constantly to keep action free of impurity, then, later, pure *karma* will go on of itself When once actions do not distort the mind, but take place naturally, one after the other, we do not notice that they have taken place at all When *karma* becomes natural and normal (*sahaja*), it becomes *akarma* As we have seen in the Fourth Section, it is this *sahaja karma* that we call *akarma* How *karma* is transformed

into *akarma*, and now we can learn this art at the feet of the saints, this too the Lord has taught at the end of the Fourth Section Words cannot describe this state of *akarma*

(18) The State of Akarma

To understand the naturalness of action, let us take a familiar example When a child first learns to walk, how much effort he has to put into it ! But to us it is a delight to watch this game We say, "Look, baby is beginning to walk !" But later, walking becomes natural He walks and he talks He does not think about it It is the same with eating We celebrate "*annaprasan*" (a ceremony performed when the child is first given solid food), as if eating is a great accomplishment But, in course of time, eating becomes quite natural How hard it is to learn to swim ! At first, we struggle for breath, but a time comes when we go for a swim to shake off fatigue Now, swimming is no effort, swimming has become second nature to the body Fatigue is a state of mind When the mind is consciously engaged in the action it feels tired, but when action becomes natural, it ceases to weigh on us *Karma* has become *akarma* It is full of joy

Our ideal is to make *karma* turn into *akarma* —to this end, we should perform the *karma* which is our *svadharma* In doing so, our failing come to light, and to remove these, we should hold on to *vikarma* Though such continuous practice, the mind will reach a stage where it will not feel the slightest effort or disgust in action Though thousands of actions are done by our hands, the mind remains clear and calm If you look up and question the sky, "Brother sky, do you not get scorched by the sun, and wet with the rain ? Don't you shiver with the cold ?" what answer do you expect ? Will it not say, "You can settle what happens to me, I know nothing "

> "Whether the man who is mad
> Is naked or clad,
> Is a matter which bothers
> Only the others "

This means that when we go on performing actions which

are our *svadharma*, in order to purify the mind with the help of *vikarma*, these actions become natural to us Even the most trying situations do not seem difficult This is the key to *karma-yoga* If you try to force open a lock without a key, you will only bruise your hands, with the key, you can open it in no time This master-key which eliminates all strain and trouble, one gets by conquering the mind So one must strive incessantly to achieve control over the mind In other words, one should wash off the dirt that appears in the mind in the course of action Then outward action will cease to cause trouble, even the feeling that "I am the doer" will vanish, *kama* and *krodha*, craving and anger, will lose their power, there will be no trace of effort Even the awareness of action will not remain

Once a good man wrote to me, "We have to do *japa* (recitation) of *Ramanama* a certain number of times Please do join us in this, and let me know how many you can do in a day" The poor man was acting to the best of his knowledge I am not saying this with the idea of criticising him But *Ramanama* is not the sort of thing to be measured or counted The mother tends the child Does she ever want to publish reports on it? If she cared for publicity, we could say, "Thank you," and discharge our debt to her But she protests, "What have I done? I've done nothing Is this a burden to me?" When, with the help of *vikarma*, a man applies his mind, and acts with full heart, it ceases to be *karma* and becomes *akarma* In such action, there is no question of strain, confusion or fatique

It is impossible to describe this state We can only form a hazy picture of it in our minds When the sun rises, does the idea enter its mind to say, "I shall banish the darkness, I shall urge the birds to fly, and set men working"? The sun just stands still, where it rises But the very fact of its being makes all the world go round But the sun is not aware of this If you said to the sun, "O Sun-God, the help you give is infinite, how much darkness you have dispelled!" it would make no sense to him He would say, "Bring a little darkness and show it to me If I can dispel it, I shall accept that I am the doer and do all this How can one carry darkness to the

sun ? Because the sun exists, darkness keeps off In the light of the sun, one man may read a good book, and another, an obscene one, one may set fire to his neighbour's house, another help a neighbour But the sun is not responsible for the good or the evil of these acts The sun says, "Light is my nature What else but light could there be in me ? I am not aware that I am shedding light For me, to be is to shine I am not aware of the strain of giving light I do not feel that I am doing anything "

The giving of light (*prakash-dan*) is natural to the sun The saints too are like that Their very life is a gift of light If you tell a *jnani*, "Sir, you are a great man, you speak the truth," he would answer, ' If I do not follow truth, what else could I do ? I am doing nothing special." There is no room for untruth near the *jnani*

Being thus is the basis of *akarma* The actions becomes so much a part of one's being and nature, that one is not conscious of their happening The senses get used to them. Actions become worship, and speech moves to virtue, for *karma* has become *akarma* The *jnani* performs good actions as naturally as the birds sing As the child thinks of its mother, so, inevitably, the saint thinks of God Every morning, the cock crows, this is its natural function Panini, the grammarian, chose this as an example, when he was teaching *svaras* to his pupils. From the days of Panini, right up till now, the cock crows every morning But no one ever thought of giving to the cock an address of thanks and appreciation One expects no recognition for acting according to one's nature It is only natural for good men to do good things like telling the truth, loving all creatures, finding no fault in others, and being of service to everyone They cannot live otherwise Do we specially honour a man for eating ? Service to others comes naturally to a *jnani*, just as eating, drinking and sleeping do to ordinary people It is impossible for him to say, "I shall not help " We should take it that the *karma* of such a *jnani* has become *akarma* This condition has been given the holy status of *akarma* which is *sannyasa* The same state should also be called "*karma-yoga* " Since the *jnani* goes on acting, it is "*yoga*", but since, even while acting, he doesn't think of it, it is *sannyasa*". Since, in action he uses a technique (*yukti*) which keeps him from being

touched by it, it is *yoga*, and since, even though acting, he does not act, it is "*sannyasa*" (being given over to the eternal goodness)

(19) One Aspect of Akarma · Yoga

What does *sannyasa* mean, ultimately? Is it giving up some actions, and doing others? No, the meaning of *sannyasa* is "giving up all action" To be free from all action, not to act at all, that is *sannyasa* But what does "not acting" mean? Action is a curious thing How can we give up all action? Action is in front of us and behind us, to right and left of us, it spreads all round us in every direction Why, if we sit down, that too is action Not only is "to sit" a verb in grammar, but sitting is a physical action And if we sit still for some time, the legs begin to ache, even sitting still is a strain When doing nothing itself turns out to be an action, how is it possible to give up action? The Lord revealed to Arjuna his Universal Form Seeing its vastness, Arjuna became afraid and shut his eyes, even then, the same form appeared within If we see a thing even when we shut our eyes, how can we escape from it? And how are we to avoid action which goes on even when we are doing nothing?

A certain man had large quantities of valuable gold jewels He wished to keep them safely locked up in a big box His servant got a big strong steel box made for him He looked at it and said, "You idiot! Have you no sense of beauty or fitness? Would anyone keep these priceless jewels in this ugly iron box? Go and get me a good gold box" The servant did as he was told "A gold box needs a gold lock," said the master Starting out to hide the gold from others' eyes, he finally succeeded in advertising it There was no need for the chief to search for the gold He had only to carry away the box Thus, not acting becomes a kind of action How can one give up action which is so all-pervasive?

But there is a way of renouncing action, and that is to devise a method by which, though we do all the actions in the world, they melt and flow away from us It is only when this becomes possible that we can say that *sannayasa* has been reached How to perform *karma* and yet make it melt and flow away? Look at the sun It acts night and day Even at night it acts and

lights up the other side of the earth Although it works all the time, no one ever talks of the sun working That is why, in the Fourth Section, the Lord says, "I taught this *yoga* first to Surya (the Sun-God) From him, Manu, the seeker and thinker, learnt it " Though working all the twenty-four hours of the day, the sun does not act There is no doubt that this condition is truly wonderful

(20) The Other Aspect of Akarma Sannyasa

But this is only one form of *sannyasa* One aspect of this state of *akarma* is that, though the man acts, he does not act The other aspect is that, though he does not act at all, he moves the whole world to action There is in him an immeasurable power to impel to action This is the parodox of *akarma* it is filled with a power that is capable of infinite action It is like steam which, when compressed, does enormous work Steam that is enclosed gains tremendous power, and moves huge ships and long trains It is the same with the sun which does nothing at all, but works all the twenty-four hours in the day If asked, the sun would say, 'I do nothing at all " One aspect of the sun is that it works day and night and yet does nothing, the other, that while it does nothing, it performs infinite action day and night These are the two splendid sides of *sannyasa*

And both are rare In one aspect, the action is explicit, and the state of *akarma* implicit In the other, though the state of *akarma* is clearly manifest, yet because of it, endless activity is continuously going on In this state, *akarma* is filled to overflowing with action, and thus mighty actions are achieved There is a world of difference between the man in this state and the idler The lazy man gets easily tired and depressed But the *sannyasi*, who does no work, conserves his power He does not work at all That is, he does not work with his limbs, or with his mind But even while he does nothing, he does infinite work

Supposing someone we have offended is just silent, and does not speak when we go to him How great is the effect of his silence, his ' renunciation of speech" ! Another man in the same situation splutters out his indignation Both are angry, but while one does not open his mouth, the other bursts out Both are examples of anger Being silent too is only a manifestation of anger And it serves the purpose. How terrible it is for a child

when its father or mother stops speaking to it ! Not speaking, giving up action, is far more effective than any kind of positive action Silence can achieve what speaking cannot Such is the state of the *jnani* His non-action, his silence, his sitting still, accomplishes much, releases great power for action What action cannot achieve, these men, remaining inactive, accomplish This is the other side of *sannyasa*

In such *sannyasa*, all initiatives and all efforts come together and rest in one place

The movement of action has stopped
And sunk like a sack on the Lord's wings
All care is over, and faith has come,
I dwell no more in the womb
Not in my own being do I live,
The Lord has robbed me of my pride
Tuka says, "I live in the being of the One
I am empty and hollow "

Tukaram says, "I am now empty, like a sack All activity is at an end " But in that empty sack there is hidden a mighty energy The sun calls aloud to no one, yet, at his sight birds fly, lambs frolic, the cows go out to graze in the forest, merchants open their shops, the farmer goes to the field, all the world gets busy It is enough that the sun exists From it, endless actions take their rise The state of *akarma* is filled with the strength to move to infinite action, it is filled to the brim with infinite power Such is the other wonderful aspect of *sannyasa*

(21) Who can Compare the Two ?

In the Fifth Section, the two ways of *sannyasa* are compared One is doing nothing while working twenty-four hours in the day, the other is doing everything while not working even for a moment The one is silence in speech, the other is speech through silence Let us consider these two divine states, and inquire about them, and meditate upon them—there is a rare joy in it

In fact, this whole matter is both rare and exalted. Truly, this idea of *sannyasa* is most holy, most beautiful We can never thank enough whoever it was that first sought and discovered an idea of such shining splendour This idea of *sannyasa* one may say, is the highest point reached by man's intellect, his power of

thought Beyond this, no man's thought has stretched, to this day Attempts at higher flights are still going on, but neither in concept nor in experience has anyone surpassed this There is a rare joy in the very contemplation of this *sannyasa* with its two aspects But when we come to the world of speech and action, the joy fails; we feel that we are falling On this matter, I have thought and talked with my friends for many years, and I have discovered the inadequacy of language to deal with it

It is a noble, delightful, poetical concept this, of doing everything by doing nothing, and doing nothing in doing everything Where else but here could we find poetry ? The famous masterpieces of poetry are insipid beside this No poem can compare with this idea in producing sheer joy, enthusiasm, energy and a sense of the divine Therefore, the Fifth Section has been established at a very high level Till the Fourth Section, *karma* and *vikarma* were described, now we are taken on a higher flight Here the two aspects of the state of *akarma* are compared before our eyes Here words stumble Is the *karma-yogi* better, or the *karma-sannyasi* ? Who really does more work ? It is impossible to answer these questions Doing nothing though doing all things, to do all things by doing nothing both alike are *yoga*, but for the sake of comparison, one is called *yoga* the other *sannyasa*

(22) Examples from Geometry and Mimamsa

It is so difficult to compare them, how then are we to set about it ? Only through illustrations But when we begin to illustrate, we have the feeling of falling from a height But we have to come down In truth, the idea of absolute *karma-sannyasa* or *karma-yoga* cannot be completely expressed in a living person, they would shatter the human body We can only use as examples the saints who have approached the ideal Examples are never perfect, but for the time being, one has to assume that they are

We say in Geometry, "Let ABC be a triangle " But why "postulate" this ? Because the lines of the triangle are not real A line, by definition, has length, but no width But how to show on the blackboard this length without width ? Every line we draw to indicate length possesses some width Therefore, in Geometry, we cannot proceed without "postulates" It is the same in *bhakti-sastra* There too the devotee says, "Let the Lord of the Universe be in this small round stone called *salagram* " If anyone exclaims,

"What madness is this?" you could ask him, "Is not your Geometry equally mad? When I see clearly a thick fat line, you ask me to suppose that it has no width Isn't that madness? If you took at it through a microscope, it is half an inch thick Just as Geometry wants us to postulate some things, *bhakti* wants us to postulate the presence of God in the *salagram*" If he says, "God won't crack, but your *salagram* will, I shall give it a blow, he is not being clever If you can "postulate" in Geometry, why not in *bhakti*? Imagine a point, we say, and draw on the board a whole circle But if you start defining a point, it might turn out to be something like defining *brahman* A point has no length, no width, no thickness—nothing, in fact Though we define it thus, we represent it clearly on the blackboard Though it exists, it has no dimensions The fact is that the true triangle, or the true point, exists only in definition, but we have to proceed on the assumption that they actually exist In *bhakti* too, we have to postulate the existence of the indestructible all-pervading God within the *salagram* We shall now make the comparison with the help of examples which we shall take to be perfect

The *mimamsakas*, the interpreters of the Vedas, have done something delightful In enquiring where God is, they have given a very beautiful explanation Regarding the gods who appear in the Vedas—Indra, Agni and Varuna—these questions arise "What sort of person is this Indra? What is his form like? Where does he dwell? And the *mimamsaka* answers, "The words 'Indra' is the form of Indra He lives in the word 'Indra' The sounds '*In-dra*' constitute his being This is his figure, this is his measure" And what about Varuna? He too is "*Va-ru-na*," —that is his form We may extend this to Agni and the other gods All the gods are formed out of syllables—this image, this conception, is delightful Our image of a god, the reality called a god, cannot be contained in any form To reveal the mental image, the syllables that make up his name are good unough symbols If asked, "What is God like?", we answer "*G-O D*" In the end, "*Om*" has worked wonders It has itself become God It has become a symbol of God It is necessary to invent such symbols, for these vast concepts cannot be enclosed in any image or form, but man's desire is compulsive He persists in attempting to give body to such ideas.

(23) The Sannyasi and the Yogi are One—Witness Suka and Janaka

Sannyasa and *yoga* are both such high concepts that in their absolute form they cannot be embodied in any human being But though they cannot be contained by the body, they can be comprehended by the mind We have to stop with describing in words what the perfect *yogi* and the perfect *sannyasi* are like They will always remain ideal and inaccessible, but as examples we should take those who have approached the ideal Then, as in Geometry, we should take it that these are perfect *yogis* and perfect *sannyasis* We illustrate *sannyasa* by Suka and Yajnavalkya As *karma-yogis*, the Gita itself mentions Janaka and Sri Krishna. Lokamanya Tilak, in *Gita-Rahasya*, gives a long list, "Janaka, Sri Krishna and others followed this path, Suka, Yajnavalkya and others followed that path " But thinking a little, one sees that the distinction evaporates as if written with water Yajnavalkya was a *sannyasi*, Janaka was a *karma-yogi* That is, Janaka, the *karma-yogi* was a disciple of Yajnavalkya the *sannyasi*, but Sukadeva the *sannyasi* was the disciple of this same Janaka Suka was the disciple of Janaka, who was the disciple of Yajnavalkya First the *sannyasi*, then the *karma-yogi*, and then again the *sannyasi*, so the garland is strung Thus *yoga* and *sannyasa* succeed each other in the same line

Vyasa said to Suka, "Suka, my son, you have no doubt attained wisdom, but no *guru* has yet set his seal on you Go therefore to Janaka " Sukadeva went Janaka was sitting on the third floor of his great palace Suka was a forest-dweller His eyes drank in the sights of the city as he went along

Janaka asked him, "Why have you come here ?"
Suka answered, "To get knowledge "
"Who sent you ?"
"Vyasadeva "
"Where do you come from ?
"From the ashram "
"What did you see in the market on the way ?"
"I saw rows upon rows of sweets piled up on all sides
"And what else did you see ?
"I saw sugar dolls walking and talking "
"And what else ?"

"For my coming up here, there were solid sugar steps "
"What else did you find ?"
"Here too, I see sugar pictures everywhere "
"What do you see now ?"
"One sugar doll talking to another "
The Janaka said, "Now you may go You have attained all wisdom "

Suka had secured what he wanted, a signed certificate from Janaka "The point is that the *karma-yogi* had accepted as disciple the *sannyasi* Suka Suka no doubt remained a *sannyasi*, but how delightful the situation is !

Parikshit was under a curse—he was to die in seven days. He had to get ready for his death He needed a *guru* who could teach him how to die He sent for Sukacharya, who came and sat cross-legged for 24 × 7 - 168 hours, narrating the *Bhagavata* He did not once change his position, and went on with his story without a break What is wonderful about this is that, though he had to work intensely for seven whole days, he felt no strain Though he was constantly working, it was as if he did no work at all He had not even a feeling of effort The truth is that *sannyasa* and *karma-yoga* are not two different things

Hence the Lord says,

"ekam saankhyam cha yogam cha yah pasyati sa pasyati "
"He truly sees, who sees *sankhya* and *yoga* as one "

He who realises that *sankhya* and *yoga* are one, can be said to have understood the real secret The one acts while being inactive, and the other, though he acts, does not feel the effort A real *sannyasi*, one who is in constant *samadhi*, and free from all distorting passion—if we keep one such with us for ten days, what light, what energy, he radiates ! What could not be achieved by repeated efforts through the years, comes easy because we look at him, because he is with us When the mind is purified by a look at a photograph, when the heart is filled with devotion, love and holiness by looking at the picture of a dead person, what inspiration can we not derive from seeing a live *sannyasi* ? The *sannyasi* and the *yogi* alike bring good to the world In the one case, though it seems as though action has been renounced, this state of

renunciation is filled to the brium with action It holds boundless creative power and illumination Both the *sannyasi* and the *karma-yogi* are *jnanis*, seers, and are entitled to the same high throne Though the names are different, the substance is the same They are two modes of the same reality A wheel in rapid motion seems at rest The state of the *sannyasi* is similar From his *santi*, has peace and steadyness, flows infinite power, endless movement Mahavira, Buddha, the Nivrttinatha were such realised souls Though all the endeavours of the *sannyasi* have ceased, and come to a rest, he does mighty deeds As stone means *pashana* and *pashana* means stone, "*sannyasa*" means "*karma-yoga*" and "*karma-yoga*" means "*sannyasa* "

(24) And Yet Yoga is to be Preferred to Sannyasa

Though all this is true, yet the Lord adds a qualification He says that *karma-yoga* is better than *sannyasa* When the two are identical, why should the Lord prefer one ? Is this a joke ? When the Lord says that *karma-yoga* is better, he speaks from the standpoint of the *sadhaka*, the seeker after perfection To do nothing, and yet to do all things, is possible for the *siddha*, the perfected one, not for the *sadhaka*, the seeker But even he can practise in some measure the method of doing all things and yet doing nothing The one rule is impossible for the seeker, it is appropriate only to the *siddha*, but the other is practicable to a certain extent, even for the seeker Action through inaction is a riddle beyond the understanding of the *sadhaka* *Karma-yoga* is both the way and the goal, but *sannyasa* is only the goal From the point of view of the *sadhaka*, *karma-yoga* is preferable to *sannyasa*

On the same principle, the Lord, in Twelfth Section stresses the *saguna* (God with form) rather than the *nirguna* (God without form) The *saguna* engages the mind and the senses, while the *nirguna* does not The *nirguna* has no use for the devotee's hands, feet or eyes—all his senses remain inactive The *sadhaka* is not able to use them aright for their over-fulfilment But in *saguna*, the eyes can see the Lord's from, the ears can hear His praises, the hands can offer worship to Him and serve human beings, the feet can take him on pilgrimage—thus all the organs are assigned appropriate work, and gradually given over to Hari, the Lord But in *nirguna*, there is a ban on all this—the mouth is shut, the ears are closed, the hands and feet bound The poor *sadhaka* looks at

this state of being bound in and shut up, and is frightened How could *nirguna* find a place in his heart ? If he sat in silence, his mind will soon be filled with a succession of unrelated thoughts And the nature of senses is such that they invariably do what they are told not to do Isn't that so in advertisements ? They write, "Don't read this," on top of something and everybody reads it first You say, "Don't read this," to see that everybody reads it and reads it attentively In *nirguna* the mind wanders Not so in *saguna-bhakti* Here there is *arati* and *puja* (ritual worship), and compassion and service to living beings, here there is work for the senses Once you have engaged the senses in work, you can say to your mind, "Now you can go where you like " But then the mind wants to go nowhere, it is delighted to say, without knowing it, it is one-pointed But if you try consciously to concentrate it on something, it will run away and escape you If you engage the various senses in noble and beautiful tasks, and then give the mind freedom to wander, it would prefer to stay It will say, "I shall stay where I am " But if you order it to sit quiet, it will say, "I'm off "

Because man has a body, *saguna* is easier and therefore better The art of acting and yet not clinging to it is preferable to action through inaction, because it is easier There is room in *karma-yoga* for effort and practice Though *karma-yoga* one can learn to control the sense and, little by little, detach the mind from all activity And if the method does not succeed today, it is bound to succeed some day Ease in practice distinguishes *karma-yoga* from *sannysa*, but in the state of perfection, they are the same Though their names are different, and they appear to be two, they are in reality one In one, the demon of *karma* is dancing without, but peace reigns within In the other, though nothing is done, there is a power to shake the three worlds In both cases, the reality is different from the appearance In perfect *karma-yoga* is *sannyasa*, perfect *sannyasa* is *karma-yoga* There is no difference, but for the seeker, *karma-yoga* is easy In the perfect state, both are one

Changadev sent a letter to Jnanadev It was just a piece of blank paper Jnanadev was younger in years, so he could not begin respectfully with "*pujya* " He could not begin with the blessing, "*chiranjivi* ", because Jnanadev was superior in wisdom He could not decide how to begin the letter So Changadev sent off the blank (*kora*) paper. It first reached the hands of

Nivrttinath He read it and gave into Jnanadev Jnanadev too read it and gave it to Muktabai Muktabai read it and said, "Changadev has become so big, but is still *kora*, hollow" Nivrttinath read another meaning in it He said, "Changadev is *kora*, innocent, he is pure and taintless and deserves to be taught" And he asked Jnanadev to answer this letter Jnanadev wrote a letter of sixty-five *ovis* (Marathi stanzas). It is still known as "Changadev's Sixty-five" Such is the delightful story of this letter It is easy to read what is written, but very difficult to read what is not written You never come to the end of it In the same way, though the *sannyasi* seems a hollow reed (*kora*), a blank piece of paper, he is full of illimitable action

In the perfect state, *sannyasa* and *karma-yoga* are of equal worth, but the practical value of *karma-yoga* is higher A currency note for fifty rupees, and a gold coin of the same value, so long as the government is stable, are of equal worth But if there is a Revolution, the note is worth nothing You can always get something in exchange for the gold coin, for it is, after all, gold In the ultimate state, renunciation of *karma* and *karma-yoga* are of equal value, because, in both, there is equal *jnana* (knowledge) and its value is *ananta*, infinite No matter what you add to infinity, the value remains infinite When *karma-tyaga* and *karma-yoga* are added to perfect *jnana* which is infinity, they become equivalent. But once you remove *jnana* from both sides of the equation, *karma-yoga* is more valuable than *karma-tyaga* to the *sadhaka*, the seeker It is only when we add firm, pure *jnana* to both, that they become equal When the goal has been reached, *jnana*+*karma*=*jnana*+*akarma* For the *sadhaka* it is difficult even to understand action through inaction He can understand inaction through action *Karma-yoga* is found both in the path and in the goal, but *sannyasa* only in the goal, and not in the path In the terminology of the *sastras*, *karma-yoga* is both the way and the goal, the *sadhan* and the *nishtha*, but *sannyasa* is only *nishtha* And "*nishtha*" means the ultimate state

VI

CONTROLLING THE MIND

(25) Keenness for self-development

In the Fifth Section, we were able to see, through

imagination and enquiry, how high a man can soar *Karma*, *vikarma* and *akarma* together complete *sadhana*, the path *Karma* is gross In all our actions performed as *svadharma*, there should be the accompanying action of mind The action performed for educating the mind is *vikarma*, which is special *karma*, or subtle *karma* *Karma* and *vikarma* are both necessary, and as we go on practising both, we lay the foundation of *akarma* In the last Section we saw how, here, *karma* and *sannyasa* become one In the beginning of the Sixth Section, the Lord says again that though the stand of the *karma-yogi* seems different from that of the *sannyasi*, they are quite the same The difference is only in the way of looking at things The aim of the later sections is to discover the path to reach the state described in Section Five

Many people mistakenly imagine that the spiritual life, and books like the *Gita*, are intended only for ascetics When a man says, "I am not ascetic," he seems to imply that ascetics form a species, like horses, lions, bears and cows, and it is further implied that the spiritual life is only intended for that species It is as if all other creatures in the work-a-day world belong to some different species, with thoughts and ways of its own Such thinking has divided humanity into two kinds of beings, ascetics and worldly men Lokamanya Tilak has drawn our attention to this in his *Gita Rahasya* I wholeheartedly endorse his view that the *Gita* is a scripture intended for ordinary men, living their daily lives in the world The *Bhagavad Gita* is for the whole world All the spiritual practices are for every man in the world *Paramartha*, the higher knowledge, teaches us how, by keeping our lives pure, we can attain equilibrium and peace of mind The *Gita* exists to tell us how our lives can be kept pure And so the *Gita* comes to your help wherever you are doing something But it is not content with leaving you just there, it takes you by the hand and leads you right to the goal Don't we know the famous saying, "If the mountain will not come to Muhammad, Muhammad will go to the mountain "? Muhammad wishes that his message should reach even the lifeless mountain Indeed, because the mountain to walk up to him The same is true with the *Gita* It is prepared to go to the lowest, the weakest, the least cultured of men And it goes to him not to keep him where he is, but to grasp him by the hand and lift him up The *Gita* wishes that man should make his actions pure, and attain the highest state That is why the *Gita*

was born

Therefore, don't raise a fence round yourself, "I am stupid, I am an ordinary fellow, wallowing in worldliness" Don't say, "What can I do ? My whole being is contained in this six-foot body" And don't raise such boundary walls around yourself and behave like an animal Be bold enough to move forward and climb upward

> "Uddharet atmanaatmaanam naatmaanamavasaadayet"
> "Let a man raise the self by the Self, let him not debase himself"

Have the courage to say, "I shall surely lift myself up" Do not kill the power of your mind, thinking, 'I am a worthless worldly creature" Do nor clip the wings of imagination, spread them out Take the *chandul* as your model When it sees the rising sun, it thinks it can reach the sun, and flies towards it We too should be like that However, high the poor *chandul* flies, can it ever reach the sun ? But through the imagination, it can certainly attain the sun But our behaviour is just the opposite We do not rise even as high as we can, but instead, we cramp our imagination, weaken our power of growth, and so flutter down to earth Even the power that is ours, we lose by undervaluing it When imagination is crippled, one cannot but fall down Let the imagination, therefore, be upward-looking Since man progresses with the help of the imagination, do not throttle it Don't whine—

> "Brother, do not leave the beaten track,
> Stay where you are in the world, don't wounder here and there in vain"

Don't dishonour your soul The seeker can be steady only when he has wide imagination and self-confidence Only by these can he sustain himself and grow But give up the feeling that *dharma* is intended only for *sadhus* and *sannyasis*, that when you go to *sadhus* and *sannyasis* it is only to get a certificate from them that, situated as you are, you are doing the best you can Do not bind yourself by thinking such self-stultifying thoughts Without noble thoughts and aspiration you cannot advance one step

If you have this vision, this aspiration, this noble confidence, then it is necessary to alter and adjust the means, else, the whole

thing comes to an end To help outward action, the mental process, called *vikarma*, was prescribed To complete *karma*, *vikarma* is constantly necessary We saw, in the Fifth Section, the device state of *akarma* reached with the help of these two, and its varieties From this Sixth Section onwards are described the varieties of *vikarma* The means of inward growth (*sadhana*) is described But before explaining the *sadhana*, the *Gita* says, "Brother Soul, you can became a god Hold on to this divine aspiration Set free the mind, and strengthen its wings " Of this *sadhana* or *vikarma*, there are many kinds, like *bhakti-yoga* (devotion), *dhyana* (meditation), *jnana-vijnana* (enquiry and analysis), *guna-vikasa* (the devolpment of the personality, and *atma-anatma-viveka* (discrimination between the Self and non-Self)

In the Sixth Section is described the kind of *sadhana* called *dhyana-yoga* (the way of mediation)

(26) One-pointedness of mind

There are three important things in *dhyana-yoga* (the way of meditation), namely (1) one-pointedness of mind, (2) setting bounds to one's life, to help achieve this, and (3) a state of equanimity or evenness of vision Without these, no true progress is possible One pointedness of mind means controlling its movements Setting bounds to one's life means doing actions after weighing and measuring them Evenness of vision means having the nobility to think in terms of the whole world These three together make up *dhyana-yoga* To achieve these three, one needs the help of *abhyasa* (practice) and *vairagya* (detachment) Let us now consider these five

First, one-pointedness of mind Whatever one may be doing, the mind should concentrate on it Even in worldly affairs such concentration is essential It is not as if the qualities needed for worldly success are different from those needed for spiritual progress The attempt to purify one's daily activities is spiritual life Whatever one does, trade or research or politics, its success or failure depends on one's concentration on it It is said of Napoleon that, after completing his arrangements for battle, he would lose himself in mathematical theories right on the field Amidst showers of bullets, and dying soldiers, Napoleon's mind was absorbed in mathematics Not that I say that Napoleon's

concentration was of the highest We know examples of higher kinds of concentration, but I wanted you to see how great his concentration was Of Caliph Omar too it is said that in the midst of a battle, when it was time for *namaz*, he would draw in his thoughts and, kneeling in the battle-field, would begin to pray, his concentration was such that he did not even know whose men were mowed down If Islam spread far and wide, it was because of the devotion to God and one-pointedness of the early Mussalmans

The other day I heard a story There was a fakir An arrow had entered his body The pain was underable But any attempt to pull the arrow out would make it worse They didn't know of chloroform or other anaesthetics in those days It was a difficult situation Some people who knew him came forward and said, "Don't try to pull out the arrow now It will be easy to do so when he is at prayer " The time came for *namaz* The fakir settled down to pray In a moment his mind became one-pointed, and he did not know that the arrow was pulled out.

Look at the power of concentration !

The idea is that, whether in worldly or in spiritual matters, success is hard to come by without one-pointedness of mind If the mind is concentrated, one will never lack ability Even if you are an old man of sixty, you will have the enthusiasm and energy of a youth As one grows older, one's mind should get stronger Look at a fruit It is green at first, then it ripens and shrinks and falls off, but all this time, the seed within gets stronger The outer body will wither, will fall, but that is not the essential part of the fruit The essential part, the soul, is the seed It is the same with our bodies. Even as the body grows older, memory should grow stronger, and knowledge brighter But this rarely happens One says, "My memory is getting weaker these days " "Why ?" "Age is growing on me " Your wisdom, learning , memory—these are the seed As the body becomes infirm with age, the soul grows correspondingly stronger But this is impossible without one-pointedness

(27) How to achieve one-pointedness

One-pointedness is of course necessary, but how does one come by it ? What should one do in order to get it ? The Lord says one should fix the mind in the Self and "think of

nothing else" (*na kinchidapi chintayet*)

But then, how is this to be done? To make the mind perfectly calm is a great thing Unless one stops with force the revolving wheel of thoughts, how can one attain one-pointedness? Even if the outer wheel is somehow stopped, the inner wheel will go on revolving As we, more and more, use external means to concentrate the mind, the inner wheels revolve all the faster You may cross your legs, sit straight, and fix your gaze But the mind won't become one-pointed because of this The important thing is to be able to still the wheels of the mind

The fact of the matter is, concentration is impossible, unless we keep within banks the *samsara* which fills and overflows our minds and the outer world We should not, as we do now, expend the soul's boundless power of knowledge on trivial, external objects Just as the man who has made his wealth not by robbing others, but by hard work, would not squander it, even so, we should not waste our power of knowledge by thinking of trivial things Discrimination is a priceless treasure, and yet we spend it on gross matters "This vegetable is not well-cooked, it needs more salt" What if it lacks a pinch of salt, brother? So much thought is spent on this great matter! We teach children within the four-walls of the schoolroom because, under the trees, they would be distracted by crows and sparrows and would not be able to concentrate their minds They are only children So long as they do not see the birds, they concentrate their minds We have grown big like horses We have even got horns Therefore even if we are enclosed in a seven-walled city, our minds wander, for we go on discussing all the trifling little things in the world The power of thought which can lead us to God, we are content to employ in talk of the taste of vegetables

The fearful *samsara* is raging day and night all round us, within and without Even in our prayer, the motive is outward benefit We don't think of union with God, forgetting *samsara* for a moment Even prayer is a mere show When the mind is in this state, assuming a posture and shutting one's eyes are all in vain Because the mind is forever running abroad, man's whole strength is lost There is no kind of discipline or control in him. We see this at every step in our country Indeed, our land is a dwelling place of the spirit Our people are looked upon as having already wings with which to fly in the upper air In such a land,

what is my state and yours ? One is pained to see so much anxiety and so much discussion devoted to silly little matters Our minds are immersed in triviality

"Sacred stories send us to sleep,
Care heeps us awake in bed,
Obscure is the way of *karma*,
Why weep ?"

The mind is fixed on nothing, or on too many things Nowhere do we see one-pointedness What a slave to the senses is man ! Once, someone asked, "Why is it said that the eyes should be half-open and half-shut ?" I said, "The answer is easy If you shut the eyes completely, you fall asleep If you keep them fully open, they turn on all sides and prevent concentration The sleep that comes to closed eyes is *tamas* The manifold activity of wide-open eyes is *rajas* Therefore, the intermediate state is prescribed "

It means that, till the mind changes, no concentration is possible The state of the mind should be pure, and this can't be achieved by assuming an erect posture All our activity should be pure To purify activity, its motive should be transformed Activity should not be pursued for one's individual profit, for satisfying the instincts, or for outward objects.

All day long we are engaged in activities What is the purpose of this day-long labour ?

"The purpose of all my effort
Is to make my last day sweet "

All this running about, this endless effort and toil, is it not because we want our final day on earth to be happy ? All the bitter sufferings of our life, what are they for ? To make the last moment, the moment of death, holy Evening comes at end of day If we have done all the work of the day with a pure heart, the evening prayer is sweet If the last moment of the day is sweet, the day's work has found its reward Then the mind easily becomes one-pointed

For concentration, such purity of life is essential Thought of outward objects should be avoided Man's life is not long, but he has the power, even in this brief life, to taste the bliss of God,

Two men may appear to be cast in the same mould—two eyes, a nose in between and two nostrils Thus the two men are similar, and yet one is like a god, the other a beast Why so ? Both are children of the same God—"all pots of the same clay"—but why this difference ? One can hardly believe they belong to the same species While one is a God in human form, the other is a monkey !

Both in past ages and amongst us today, there have been men who know what heights man can rise to This is a matter of experience Now as in the past, there have been men to show what power there is in the human body If man can achieve such miracles dwelling in the body, why then can I not ? Why should I set limits to my imagination ? I too have the same human body with which others have become heroes of humanity, so why should I be in this plight ? I am making some mistake My mind is always roaming abroad It is so busy judging others But where is the need for me to judge others ?

"Why look at the good and bad in others,
Are my own faults few ?"

If I am always absorbed in observing tiny little things in others, how can my mind become one-pointed ? In this condition, I can only be one of two things, asleep (in a state of nothingness) or distracted (at many points) I am caught in *tamas* or *rajas*

It is true that the Lord tells us how to sit, how to direct the eyes and so on, to make the mind one-pointed But it is only when we have first realised the need for one-pointedness, that these have value Once a man is firmly convinced of the indispensability of one-pointedness, then who will seeks and find for himself the means to attain it

(28) Living within Bounds

Another aid to concentration is to set bounds to one's life All our actions must be measured and weighed Precision, the secret of mathematics, should be found in all our actions As we measure out each dose of medicine before taking it, our sleep and food too should be in measure This should be so everywhere in our life All our senses should be under strict watch, to see that we do not sleep too much, or eat too much, or even look at too many things.

One gentleman said of another, "When he enters a room, he notes in a second what things are kept in it, and where " I prayed within myself, "Lord, may I never have this power !" Am I his secretary, or am I a thief, that I should compile and keep in my head an inventory of his possessions ? How does it concern me where he keeps his soap or his watch ? Of what use is this knowledge to me ? We should stop employing our eyes thus uselessly And we should restrain our ears as well Some people seem to think that it would be wonderful to have ears like a dog's Then they could turn in any direction we want It is certainly a defect that our ears are fixed like this But we don't need this useless power As it is, the mind is far too busy The slightest noise, the slightest disturbance, and our minds are drawn to it Therefore I say, establish order and discipline in your life Let us not look at bad things, or read bad books Let us not listen to ironical praise of others Let us turn away not only from bad things, but also from innocent things beyond measure Avoid greed of all kinds Of course, we should never have wine or pakoras or rasagullas, but even of bananas or oranges, we can have too many Fruit is of course pure food, but even of that one can have too much The master within will not tolerate the licence of the tongue The senses should realise that the Lord within would surely punish them if they did what they liked Disciplined conduct is called setting bounds to life

(29) Friendly Outlook

The third thing is a balanced outlook, which is the same thing as a friendly outlook Without this, the mind cannot become one-pointed The lion is the mighty king of the forest and he does not take four steps forward without looking behind How can the lion, that lives by violence, attain concentration of mind ? The eyes of the lion, the crow and the cat constantly rove about Their look shows fear and suspicion Such is the state of animals that are violent But we should develop a sense of equality All creation should appear to us auspicious and friendly I should trust all creatures as I trust myself What have we to fear ? All things are pure, all things holy

"visvam tat bhadram yadavanti devaah,"

This Universe is auspicious, full of goodness, because God look after it As Browning says

"God in his heaven—
All's right with the world !"

Nothing is wrong in this world If there is anything wrong, it is in my vision As is my vision, so is the world If I wear red glasses, the world too would appear red and aflame

Ramdas, as he wrote his *Ramayan*, read it out to his students Unknown to anyone, Hanuman too would come and sit among them, and listen to it Samarth Ramdas had written, "Hanuman reached the *asoka*-grove, and he saw the white flowers there" Hearing this, Hanuman appeared suddenly and said, "I saw no white flowers, the flowers I saw were red What you have written is wrong Correct it" Samarth insisted, "I have written right. The flowers you saw were white" Hanuman would not yield, he said, "It was I that went there Would I tell a lie?" The dispute was at last taken to Sri Ramachandra "The flowers were of course white," he said, "but Hanuman's eyes were red with anger, and saw the pure white as red" The point of this charming story is that what the world appears to us to be depends on the vision we take to it

So long as we do not feel sure that the whole creation is auspicious, the mind will not be non-pointed As long as we think that something is wrong with the world, we look at all things with suspicion Poets sing of the happy freedom of birds, but let them try being a bird for a while Then they would know what a bird's freedom is really worth The neek of a bird dances back and forth all the time It is ever afraid of others If you put your bird on the seat of meditation, will it attain one-pointedness ? If we approach it, it would fly away at once, afraid that we mean to kill it Those whose minds are filled with the fearful idea that the whole world destroys and devours, what can they know of peace ? So long as the thought that I alone defend myself, and all others are devourers, does not leave the mind, there can be no one-pointedness For this, the best means is the *bhavana*, the attitude, of equality Once you start seeing friendliness everywhere, the mind will, of itself, attain peace.

Take an unhappy man to the banks of a clear running river At the sight of the pure, calm, flowing water, he ceases to be restless, he forgets his troubles Whence did this moving water gain such power ? The benign power of God is manifested

through this The Vedas are full of beautiful descriptions of streams

"atishthantiinam anivesanaanaam"

Such are these streams The stream flows without a break, it has no resting-place, no home of its own, it is a *sannyasi* Such a pure stream calms my mind in a moment When I look at such a lovely stream, will not a spring of love and wisdom well up in my heart ?

If this lifeless water without can confer such serenity on my mind, how much deeper the peace if, in the valley of the mind there should spring up the living strean of *bhakti* and *jnana* !

Once a friend of mine was wandering in Kashmir, among the Himalayas He used to write to me describing the holy mountains and lovely streams there I replied to him, "These streams and mountain ranges and sweet air that give you peerless joy, I can experience them all in my heart I behold these lovely sights constantly in the world within That is why, though you invite me, I shall not leave behind the bliess of this divine Himalaya."

"sthaavaraanaam himaalayah"

The Lord declared, "Among mountains I am Himalaya." One worships the Himalaya, the symbol of steadfastness, in order to attain steadfastness And if on hearing its description I deserted my post of duty, what would I gain ?

The meaning of it all is that we should calm the mind a little. If one looks at the world with friendly eyes, a perennial stream will spring in the heart, divine stars will shine in the inner firmament When the mind gains peas from the sight of sacred object made of stone and clay, will it not do so while contemplating the sights of the world within the heart ? Once, during a visit to Trivandrum, I was sitting on the beach The boundless sea, its majestic roaring and the evening hour quietened my mind, and I sat still My friend brought me some fruit to eat But at that time, even *sattvik*, this innocent food. was like poison to me. roaring "Om, Om" of the sea reminded me of the phrase from the Gita "*maamanusmara yuddhya cha,*" "Remember me and

fight on" The sea was constantly remembering and naming the Lord, and at the same time doing its work A wave came forward, it went back, and then another The sea had not a moment's rest At sight of this, my hunger and thirst disappeared When you come to think of it, what is there in the sea ? If the sight of the salt sea waves rising and falling could make my heart rejoice, how would I dance with joy when the unfathomable ocean of my heart throws up waves of wisdom and love ! The waves of this ocean were beating in the heart of the Vedic seer—

> "antah samudre hrdi antaraayushi
> ghrtasya dhaaraa abhichaakasiimi
> samudraa uurmir madhumaan udaarat "

The commentators have found it difficult to explain this divine language What are these streams of ghee and honey rising within the heart ? Will waves of brine rise in the ocean of my heart ? No, no In the ocean of my heart, waves of milk, honey ghee, are beating

(30) Child-preceptor

Learn to behold this ocean of the heart Look up at the cloudless sky outside and make the heart clear and pure To tell the truth, one-pointedness of mind is child's play, an ordinary thing It is distraction of mind that is unnatural, artificial Look steadily into the eyes of a little child While it looks at you intently, you have blinked a dozen times Children's minds becomes easily one-pointed Show a little child, four or five months old, the rich greenness of Nature without It will gaze intently on it Mothers think that, if a child looks a green trees and plants, even its motions are green It is as if all its senses are in its eyes when it looks through them Any little incident makes a powerful impression on the child's mind Educationists regard the first three or four years of a child's education as the really effective part of education No matter how many Universities, or High Schools or Cultural Associations you establish, one never gets again what one had in the first few years I have had something to do with education Day by day, my conviction becomes stronger that the effect of this formal education is just

nothing The impressions formed in the earliest years are set as in hard cement Later education is like superficial plastering or the colour-wash outside By using soap and water, you can wash off dirt from the body, but how to wash off the colour of one's skin ? Thus the first impressions are hard to remove

How is it that the first impresssions are so strong, and the later ones weak ? It is because in childhood one-pointedness of mind comes naturally Because of this one-pointedness of mind, impressions then received are indelible. Such is the power of one-pointedness There is nothing impossible for those who have it

Today our whole life has become artificial Our childhood is lost to us There is no richness, no real joy in life, it has dried up We act waywardly, capriciouly It is not Darwin but we ourselves that prove by our actions that the ape in our ancestor

The little child is trustful Its mother's world is its authority. It never occurs to it to question the truth of the stories it hears. "The crow said," "The sparrow said,"—all this sounds true to the child Because of this innocence and friendliness, the child becomes easily one-pointed

(31) Practice, Detachment, Faith

For *dhyana-yoga* (the way of meditation), it is thus seen that one-pointedness of mind, disciplined living and a friendly and balanced outlook are necessary Besides these, two other aids, detachment and practice, are mentioned The first is negative and destructive, the other, positive and constructive To remove and throw away the weeds in the field is destructive work—this is *vairagya*, detachment To sow seeds in the field is costructive work To think good thoughts again and again is *abhyasa*, practice *Vairagya* is negative, *abhyasa* is positive work How to acquire *vairagya* ? The mango, we say, is sweet But is this sweetness only in the fruit ? No, it is the fruit alone We pour the sweetness of the Self into objects, and then they taste sweet Therefore, learn to taste the sweetness within The sweetness of external objects is not in themselves But the sweetness of all sweet things, "*rasaanaam rasatamah*," the sea of this sweetness, is the Self within me As I go on meditating that all sweet

objects gain their sweetness from the Self, *vairagya* fills the mind Mother Sita gave a pearl necklace to Hanuman Hanuman, puling out the pearls, bit them one by one, tasted each and threw it away In none of them could he find Rama Rama was in his heart For these same pearls, people give even lakhs of rupees !

In describing *dhyana-yoga*, the Lord has taught us an important lesson at the very beginning And that is, that one should make a firm resolve, "I have to raise myself by my own effort But I shall rise, I shall reach the heavens I shall not lie helplesss in this human body. I shall bare to approach God, and make all the effort needed for it "

Listening to all this, Arjuna had a doubt He said, "My days are over, Lord If in a short while I die, what is the use of all this *sadhana*, this practice ?" The Lord replied, "Death is only a long sleep." Every day, after working hard, we sleep seven or eight hours Is anyone afraid of this sleep ? We worry only when we do not get sleep Like sleep, death too is necessary Just as we wake up from sleep and resume our work, our former *sadhana* will avail us even after death Jnanadev in his *Juanesvari* has written some verses in this context which seem to reveal his own inner life

"All knowledge came of itself in childhood, all the *sastras* sprang into speech of their own accord "

These lines show how the *abhyasa* of a former birth draws you The minds of some are not drawn to the objects of sense They do not know what *moha*, delusion, is For, they have, in a former birth, completed their *sadhana*, their preparation The Lord gives the assurance, "One who treads the path of righteousness, my son, will never come to grief " His effort will not be wasted We are given this faith at the end of the Chapter What is imperfect shall be made perfect Accept this teaching of the Lord and make your life fruitful

VII

PRAPATTI, OR SURRENDER TO GOD

(32) The Sublime Vision of Bhakti

Brothers when Arjuna faced the problem of maintaining his *svadharma*, his mind was preplexed by the illusion of "mine" and

"not mine," and he began to ways to escape his *svadharma* This futile illusion of his was shown in the First Section The Second Section set out to remove this illusion That the soul is indestructible and all-pervading, that the body is transient, and that one should never give up one's *svadharma*—these three principles were stated there The method of realising these principles was also taught, this technique is the renunciation of the fruits of action. In explaining this *karma-yoga,* three things - *karma, vikarma* and *karma*—emerged In the Fifth Section, we saw the two aspects of *akarma* produced by the union of *karma* and *vikarma* From the Sixth Section onwards, the varieties of *vikrama* are described In the Sixth Section was explained the importance of one-pointedness for the *sadhaka,* the seeker

Today we deal with the Seventh Section This Section, one might say, opens out a beautiful new mansion of *vikarma.* As one reads the *Gita,* one gets the impression of being in the temple of Nature, of walking though a mi ght forest, seeing many beautiful sights In the Sixth Section we dwelt in the mansion of one-pointedness, now we shall enter another mansion

Before throwing open the doors of this mansion, the Lord makes us understand the secret of the structure of this enticing world On the same kind of paper and with the same bursh, an artist paints a variety of pictures The *vina*-player, out of seven notes, makes so many different *ragas* With few letters in the alphabet, we express an endless variety of thoughts and feelings Look on this creation too in the same light There are in innumerable objects, and many modes of being But all this exterior and interior creation is made up of two things—the indivisible *atman* and the eight-fold forms of Nature The anger of the angry man, the love of the love, the agony of the sufferer, the happiness of the happy one, the drowsiness of the idler, the activity of the worker—all these are the play of the same power of *chaitanya,* Intelligence At the root of all these contradictory movements, and filling them all, is a single Intelligence As the Intelligence within is one, so too is the outer veil single in its nature The Lord tells us in the beginning that all creation is born of conscious *atman* and inert Nature

While everywhere spirit and body, the supernatural and the natural, are thus one, why is man caught in illusion ? Why does he see difference ? While the face of the loving man is pleasant to

look at the sight of another fills us with disgust Why are we attracted by one and repelled by the other ? The same pencil, the same paper, the same artist , and yet the various pictures reveal various kinds of emotion The skill of the artist lies precisely here There is a skill in the fingres of the painter or the *vina*-player that makes us laugh and cry All the magic is in the fingers of the artist

This man is near to me, the other distant, this is mine, that is his—such thoughts arise in our minds, and on occasion deflect us from our duty, all because of illusion If we are to escape this illusion, we should learn the secret of the creative skill of the Lord's fingers The *Brhadaranayka Upanishad* gives the drum (*dundubhi*) as an example The same drum gives out many kinds of sound Some frighten me, others make me dance If I am to master all these emotions, I have to catch hold of the drummer Once he is in our hands, all the notes too are in our hands In one word the Lord says, "Those who wish to cross *maya* let them take refuge in me "

> "Only those who are surrendered to me will escape the play of *maya*, for them, the waters of *maya* dry up here and now "

What then is this that we call "*maya*" ? The power of God, His art, the skill of His hand—this is what we call *maya* *Maya* is nothing but the power of the art of the Creator who out of *atman* and *prakrti* (Spirit and Nature),—or, in Jain terminology, *jiva* and *ajiva* (the living and the non-living)—out of these materials, formed this many-coloured world Just as in the jail out of the same grain they make bread as well as the *dal* that tastes of everything, in the same way, out of the indivisible spirit and the eightfold body, the Lord creates an endless variety of things Seeing this, we experience many contradictory emotions of good and bad If we wish to transcend these diversities and attain true peace, we should try and catch hold of the maker of them all, and become friends with him It is only when we come to know him that we can escape the illusion which cause diversity and desire

In the Seventh Section, the Lord has thrown open the beautiful mansion of *bhakti*, the powerful *vikarma*, the effective means, for knowing Him To attain purity of mind many *vikarma* are

prescribed, like *yajna* and *dana* (sacrifice and gifts) *japa* and *tapa* (prayer and penance), *dhnaya* and *dharana* (meditation and concentration) These means I should compare with washing soda and soap But *bhakti* is the water Without water these other things are useless, but even without these, water can clean If we had them too, it would be as if sugar fell into milk by accident If in *yajna*, *yoga*, *dhyana* and *tapas* the heart does not enter, how can purify of mind result ? It is the involvement of the heart that is *bhakti*

Bhakti is essential to all kinds of effort It is the universal method If a trained nurse, attending on a patient, has not the *bhavana*, the mental attitude of service, how could it be true service ? If a bullock is strong, but is not inclined to draw the cart, he will hang his head and lie down, or even overturn it in a ditch In work without heart, there is neither strength nor satisfaction

(33) Pure Joy though Bhakti

If we have *bhakti*, we can see the skill of the great artist, the brush in his hand If once we taste the rare sweetness of the stream at its source, all other pleasures become flat and insipid A man who has tasted real bananas would not be taken in by bananas of painted wood or clay, however beautiful A man who tasted the sweetness of a mountain stream would not care for syrups

Once, some people said to a philosopher, "There is a festival of lamps in the city today Let us go and see it " He replied "What, after all, is this festival of lights ? One lamp, then another, then a third, and so on, a lakh, a million, a crore—as many as you please And that is your festival " In an arithmetical progression like 1+2+3 going on to infinity, once we know the difference between one term and the next in the series, there is no need to write it all down These lamps are arranged one after the other, what is there in it to get so excited about ? But then, man likes this sort of pleasure He squeezes a lemon, and mixes sugar and water the juice, sips it and smacks his lips and exclaims "How delightful this drink is !" What else has the tongue to do, except to taste ? We blend all sorts of tastes—and its whole pleasure is in tasting them When I was a boy, I once went to the cinema I took with me a piece of sacking in case I wanted to sleep On the screen appeared dazzling pictures of fire,

which in a few minutes tired my eyes out I went to sleep, asking my neighbour to wake me up when the show over Instead of going out into the open air at night, and looking up at the moon and the stars in the sky, and enjoying the holy peace of Nature, why do people get cooped up in threatres and watch and applaud the dance of these fiery figures ? I never could understand this

Why is man so joyless ? The poor fellow finds some sort of pleasure in these lifeless figures When there is no joy in life, people go in for such artificial amusements Once I heard drums beating in the neighbourhood I enquired what it was for, and was told that a child has been born What is there so special about your having a child that you should announce it to the world with beat of drums ? Is it not childish to celebrate a child-birth with all this dancing and singing and mirth ? It is as if the world is famished for joy Just as in a famine people rush in a frenzy at the sight of grain, so we, hungry for joy, make a lot of fuss when a child or a cinema or a circus arrives.

Is this true joy ? Waves of music enter the ear and impinge on the mind, forms impinge on the mind through the eyes For these poor folk, all pleasure consists in these impacts While one man sniffs in powdered tobacco, another rolls it into a *beedi* and inserts it into his mouth And when the snuff or the smoke hits them they feel they have a cart-load of pleasure Their joy knows no bounds when they pick up a cigarette end Tolstoy says, "A man might even commit murder under the influence of cigarettes " It is a kind of intoxication

Why does man lose himself in such pleasures ? Because he does not know where his true joy lies man is beguiled by shadows Now he derives his pleasure only from his five senses If he did not have the sense of sight, he would imagine that the world offers only four kinds of pleasures If tomorrow a man came down from Mars with six senses, these poor people with only five would cry in sorrow, "Compared to him, how despicable we are !"

How can the full meaning of the universe be apprehended by these five senses ? Even among the objects of these five senses, man chooses only a few, and is lost in them When the donkey's braying reaches his ear, he says in disgust, "What an inauspicious noise !" But is not the sight of you inauspicious to the donkey ?

If it hurts you, do you never hurt others, even granting that the braying of the donkey is inauspicious ? When I was studying in Baroda College, some celebrated European musicians visited the College No doubt they sang marvellously, but since I was not used to that kind of singing, I sat there wondering when I could escape this infliction I decided that they did not deserve to pass. And when our singers go abroad, they too would perhaps be esteemed in this fashion Some find joy in music, others don't Which means that this is not true joy, but illusory. Until we experience true joy, we shall toss up and down on these deceptive pleasures Till Asvatthama tasted genuine milk, he was satisfied with flour mixed in water Once we have seen the true nature of the universe, and tasted its joy, we shall find these other pleasures insipid

The best way to discover this joy is *bhakti* As we go along this path, we shall discover the skill of the Lord When we reach this divine image, all other images disappear of themselves Then you will not be attracted by anything trivial Then you will see that the whole world is filled with pure joy Though there are hundreds of sweetment shops they are filled with the same sweets Until the real thing comes to our hands, we are like restless birds pecking at this and that, I was reading the *Tulasi-Ramayan* in the morning There was a cloud of moths surrounding the lamp Just then, a lizard appeared What interest had it in the *Ramayan* ? But the sight of the moths was sheer joy. As it was about to pounce on the insects, I moved my hand, and it ran away Even then its attention was concentrated on the moths I thought within myself, "Would you eat these insects ? Does your mouth water at the sight of them ?" No, my mouth did not water What could the poor lizard know of the joy that I was experiencing ? It could not taste the sweetness of the *Ramayan* Our condition is not very different from that of the lizard We intoxicated by a multitude of enjoyments But when we find true joy, how sweet it would taste ! The Lord has shown us the way of *bhakti*, through this we can reach and taste the true joy

(34) Even Bhakti Born of Desire has Value

The Lord speaks of three kinds of devotee (*bhakta*)—(1) *sakama bhakta*, one who prays for something, (2) the disinterested but partial *bhakta*, and (3) the *jnani*, the seer, or the

perfect *bhakta* The disinterested but partial *bhakta* is of three kinds—(1) the afflicted, (2) the seeker after knowledge, and (3) the seeker of meaning and purpose These are the branches and twigs of the tree of *bhakti*

What is meant by *sakama bhakti*, interested *bhakti*? It is approaching the Lord with some desire in the heart I do not despise this as a low form of *bhakti* Many people render public service for name and fame What is wrong in that? Give them honour, you will do no harm by it Because they receive honour they will get confirmed in service, and then they will begin to find joy in their work This desire for recognition, what does it mean ultimately? Through recognition, one gets the faith that what one is doing is right One who has no inward means of deciding whether his service is good or bad, such a one accepts this external test When the mother pats the child wants on the back and says, "Well done, my child!", the child wants to help all the more The *sakama bhakta* too is like that He could go straight to the Lord, and say, "Give," asking for what he wants The habit of going to the Lord and asking Him for whatever one wants is not common It is something rare

Jnanadev asked Namadev, "Will you go with me on a pilgrimage?" Namadev said, "But why?" Jnanadev answered, "We shall meet saints and good men" Namadev said, "Then I shall ask the Lord and come" Namadev went to the temple and stood before the Lord Tears flowed from his eyes His eyes were fixed on the feet of the Lord At last, he asked, sobbing, "Lord, am I to go?" Jnanadev stood by his side all the time Would you call Namadev a mad man? There are lots of people who cry because their wives are away But the *bhakta* who goes to the Lord and weeps, even if it is only because he wants something, is rare That he does not demand what he ought to demand, this only shows his ignorance, but just because of this, it would be wrong to regard his interested *bhakti* as something unworthy and to be rejected

Women get up early in the morning and perform a number of rites, they light lamps, go round the *tulasi* plant and so on What for? So that after death they can get the grace of God This faith may be simple, but for its sake they observe prayer and fasting and other vows Among people who live such devoted lives, great souls are born Ramatirtha was born in the

line of Tulasidas He was a scholar in the Persian language Some one told him, "How is it that you, born in the line of Tulasidas, don't know Sanskrit ?" This went straight to his heart Such is the effect of remembering one's ancestry ! Impelled by it, he took up the serious study of Sanskrit We should not make light of the piety of women Where these little drops of piety gather, illustrious children are born Therefore, the Lord says "I confirm the devotion even of the interested *bhakta* I will not confuse him If he prays with true heart that his illness should go, I will confirm his will to health, and cure him of his illness No matter with what motive he comes to me, I will welcome him with love " Think of Dhruva When he was refused a place in his father's lap, his mother told him "Ask the Lord for a place " Dhruva was absorbed in prayer, and the Lord gave him a fixed abode (He is the Pole Star) Even if the mind is not desireless, does it matter ? The important thing is whom one approaches, from whom one begs There is greatness in begging from the Lord rather than from the world

Whatever the excuse, enter the temple of *bhakti* Though in the beginning you enter it with a motive, you will later become disinterested Those who conduct khadi exhibitions plead with people "Do come in and take a look at the fine texture, the bright colours, the beautiful patterns " Once they come in, they are converted *Bhakti* too is like that Once you enter its temple, you will discover its beauty and power for yourself

When Dharmaputra reached at last the gates of heaven, there was only a dog with him Bhima, Arjuna and the others had fallen by the wayside He was told "You can come in, but the dog is not allowed to enter " Dharma answered "If my dog cannot enter, neither will I " One who performs devoted service, even if it is only a dog, is superior to those who are always thinking of themselves The dog proved its superiority even to Bhima and Arjuna Even a worm that moves towards God is greater than the greatest of men who have not turned towards Him In the temple there are images of the tortoise and the bull, and everyone bows before the bull Why ? Because it is not an ordinary bull, because it stays before the Lord Even if it is a 'bull, we cannot forget that it is the Lord's bull It is greater than the wisest of men Even a dull creature, if it thinks of the Lord, earns the reverence of the universe

I was once travelling in a train It was passing over a bridge across the Jumna A passenger sitting next to me flung with great enthusiasm a coin into the river There was a rationalist in the compartment who observed, "The country is poverty-stricken, and on top of that, there are people who throw coins out of carriage windows " "You have not understood why he does it " I said "The *bhavana*, the mental attitude with which he threw the coin, is worth at least two or three such coins, is it not ? If the money had been given for some good cause, it would no doubt have been better We shall think about it later But then, he was moved to do this because of the feeling that this is not a mere river, but the Lord's compassion flowing before us Is there any room for this feeling in your Economics ? When his eyes saw one of his country's rivers, his heart melted If you can assess in terms of money the value of this feeling, then I shall know how to estimate your patriotism " Does love of country mean mere bread ? If on seeing one of the great rivers of one's country, the idea awakes in one's mind that one should immerse all one's possessions in it, and dedicate them to it, how great is that love ! All that wealth, those discs of gold and silver, the pearls excreted by the oyster the hardened coal which we call diamonds—they are indeed worthy of being thrown into the waters Regard them as dust at the feet of the Lord You may wonder what is the connection between a river and the feet of the Lord In your creation, has the Lord a place ? The river is a combination of oxygen and hydrogen The sun is a big kind of gas-lamp, Why worship these ? One should, therefore, bow low before this loaf of bread But what is there even in this loaf of bread ? Even that, if you go into it, is a kind of white earth Why does your mouth water at the sight of it ? Here is the big bright sun just risen, here is the beautiful river flowing past—if you do not see God in them, where can you see Him ? Wordsworth laments,—

> "The Rainbow comes and goes,
> And lovely is the Rose,
> The sunshine is a glorious birth,
> But yet I know, where'er I go,
> That there hath past away a glory from the earth "

He says with great sorrow, ' My heart used to leap up when I beheld a rainbow in the sky, it used to dance with the daffodils,

but why does it dance no more ? Have I lost the sweetness of life and become a stone ?"

The truth is that even selfish *bhakti*, even superstitious reverence, has high value In the end, a great power will spring from them No matter what sort of a person one is, if one goes once into the presence of the Lord, one becomes worthy of honour No matter what sort of wood is thrown into the fire, it will burn Devotion to the Lord, *bhakti*, is a wonderful means for attaining Him He rejoices even in the devotion that is accompanied by desire In due course, such *bhakti* becomes desireless and tends towards perfection.

(35) Disinterested Bhakti—Its Varieties and Fullness

We have seen the *sukama bhakta*, the devotee with a motive. We now turn to the *nishkama bhakta*, the disinterested *bhakta* Even of this *bhakti* there are two kinds—the partial and the whole. Of the partial devotees again, there are three kinds

The first is the afflicted devotee They seek the compassion of the Lord, sobbing and crying and restless for Him, like Namadev They are eager, sorrow-stricken, desperate, and agitated, thinking, "When shall I taste the nectar of the Lord's love, when I shall I embrace Him and fulfil my life's purpose, when shall I throw myself at His feet and be one of the blessed ?" They look in every action for truth, sincerity, yearning and love

The second kind are the seekers of wisdom There are not many such in our country today Such a devotee of truth would attempt again and again to climb Gaurisankar and perish in the attempt, he would go in search of the North Pole and after writing down his discoveries on a piece of paper, and sealing it in a bottle which he leaves floating on the waters, he dies, he would descend into the womb of a volcano We Indians today are terribly afraid of death We have no higher ideal in life than looking after our family In the seeker after wisdom, there is an irrepressible hunger for knowledge, an eagerness to know the truth He will investigate the nature and qualities of everything As one by following the river comes at last to the sea, the seeker after knowledge reaches the Lord

The third kind of *bhakta* seeks meaning and purpose (*artha*), in all things *Artha* here does not mean money or wealth, it only means welfare and happiness The test he applies to every action, the touch-stone, is, "How will society benefit ?" Whatever

he speaks, writes, or does, he would make sure that it does good, not harm, to the world He would never agree to anything that is useless or harmful One who wishes for the world's welfare is indeed a *mahatma* His whole happiness is in the welfare of the world

The first kind of *bhakta*, the afflicted one, looks at the whole world through eyes of love, the second kind, the seeker of knowledge, through the eye of discovery, and the third, the seeker of meaning, from the point of view of the world's welfare

Though these three kinds of *bhaktas* are all disinterested, still they are one-sided One reaches the Lord through *karma*, the second through love, the third through knowledge What remains is the perfect *bhakta*, and he may be called the *jnani-bhakta*, the seer-saint All that he sees as regards as forms of God In the ugly as in the handsome person, in the beggar as in the king, in men, women, animals and birds, everywhere he sees only the pure presence of God Tukaram prays, "Make my mind such, Oh Lord, that it sees men, women and children all as Narayana" We have in Hinduism such mad rites as the worship of the serpent, the elephant-headed God, and trees, but we see greater madness in the seer-saints From the ant to the sun and the moon, in all that they see, everywhere, they behold the Lord, and in their hearts beat the waves of the ocean of joy, "An endless, boundless bliss, a sea of joy, wells up"

This divine and beautiful vision, you may call an illusion if you like But this illusion is a source of comfort, a fund of joy In the majestic ocean he sees the grandeur of the Lord, in Mother Cow he sees the mother-like tenderness of God, in the earth he sees His patience, in the clear sky His purity in sun, moon and stars, His brightness and beauty In the flower he sees His softness, and in evil men, the Lord who tests and tries us Thus he practises the art of seeing the one God at play everywhere, and doing so, one day, the seer-saint merges into the Lord.

VIII

ACHIEVING THE GOAL—THE YOGA OF CONSTANCY

(36) Developing Good Samskaras

Human life is full of the play of *samskaras*—tendencies

developed by repeated actions Innumerable actions are going on through us all the time If we started counting them, we should never come to an end Even if we take a superficial look at the activities that go on in twenty-four hours, do you realise how huge the number would be ? Eating, drinking, sitting, sleeping, walking, wandering, a little work, writing, talking, reading—besides these, how many dreams, likes and dislikes, honour and dishonour, pain and pleasure, in endless variety ! And they all leave associations, build up tendencies in the mind Hence, if someone asks me what life is, I should explain it as an aggregate of *samsakras*

Samsakras can be bad as well as good And they both have their effects on human life We cannot even recollect the actions of our infancy, our childhood is like something written on a slate and rubbed off The *samskaras* of a former birth are like written completely rubbed out—so much so that one wonders whether there was a former birth at all When we do not remember our childhood even in this birth, why talk of previous births ? Never mind former births, let us think of this one It is not as if only those things which we remember took place Many are the things done, and many the things known, but all this action and knowledge disappear, leaving only a trace of *samskaras* behind If when we go to bed at night we try to recollect all our actions of the day, they don't all come back What actions do come back before our mind's eye ? Only those which were vivid and distinct If we had a quarrel with someone, the impression lasts, for what was the day's earnings Important and distinct leave a deep impression on the mind, other actions fade away from memory When we write a diary, we mention only two or three outstanding events When from these diary accounts we make up a weekly summary, many even of these will drop out, and only the most outstanding events remain In the same way, in a month or six months, in a year or five years, very few outstanding events alone remain in the memory and it is these which from our *samskasa* Though innumerable actions take place, and endless knowledge is acquired, in the end, the mind retains very little of it all All those various actions, all that varied knowledge, came along, and did their work and disappeared Out of all this action only a few lasting *samskasa* are left And these form our capital We conduct the business of life and accumulate *samskasa* The merchant keeps his daily, monthly and annual accounts of income and expenditure,

and at the end arrives at the single figuie of profit or loss, in the course of our lives, we enter on the credit side various *samskasa*, but at the end a single, firm, clear figure remains in the account In the last moments of life the soul begins to think of this final figure As it looks back on all the achievements of a life-time, it realises that the gains are just two or three things This does not mean that all those actions and all that knowledge have been wasted They have done their work, and that is all After the thousands of transactions, the nett result is just a loss of five thousands rupees, or a profit of ten thousands rupees If there is a loss his heart sinks, and if there is a gain it bounds with joy

We too are in the same position If at the moment of death one wants something to eat, that is conclusive proof that all our lives we have trained ourselves but to please the plate All that we have laid up in a long life is a taste for eating and drinking—this is the *vasana* we carry over If a mother at the moment of death thinks of her child, we may take it that her strongest *samskasa* is love of her child, all her other innumerable actions, it is clear, are secondary In arithmetic we are familiar with problems in proper fractions, but however, big the figures, when we reduce them, the result approximates to zero or one In the same way, a single powerful *samskara* alone remains at last as the essential thing This is the answer to the problem of life The thought arising in the final moment is the fruit of the whole of one's life

All the efforts of life should be guided by the idea that this final fruit should be full of sweetness, that the last moment should be blissful When the end is sweet, all else is sweet We should fix the mind on this final answer while solving the problems of life Plan the whole of life with this ideal in view In arriving at the answer to a problem, we should keep the main issue in mind We should direct the current of our lives in such a way that we strength the *samskara* which we wish to be firm in the last moment of our lives Our whole attention should be turned in that direction, day and night

(37) Remember the Moment of Death

In this Section it is stated that the thought that is upper-most at the moment of death prevails in the succeeding birth The soul sets out for the jorney ahead, with the provision for the way Taking today's earnings with us, after a night's sleep, we begin

tomorrow. In the same way, with the accumulations of this life, after the heavy sleep of death, we resume the journey in the next birth. The end of this *janma* is the beginning of the next. Walk through life having in mind the hour of death.

This is necessary also because we should conquer the fear of death and make it easy to cross over. There is a story about Eknath. A man asked him, "Maharaj, your life is so simple and sinless. Why is our life utterly different? You are angry with none, you qnarrel with none, you hate none. How calm, how loving, how pure you are!" Eknath replied, "Never mind me. I have found out something about you. In seven days from now, you will die." Who could disbelieve Eknath's words? Death in seven days? Only 168 hours left. Oh, God, what a calamity! He ran in haste to his house. Nothing seemed clear to him. He was talking of disposing of his affairs and preparing for the end. Then he fell ill. He lay flat on his bed. Six days passed. On the seventh day, Eknath came to visit him. He greeted the saint. Eknath enquired, "How are you?" He said, "All is over. Now I am going." Eknath asked further, "In these six days, how many sins did you commit? And how many sinful thoughts came into your mind?" And the man who had been awaiting death answered, "Lord, where was the time to think of evil thoughts? Death stood over before my eyes." Eknath said, "Now you know the reason, don't you, why our lives are absolutely sinless? When Death the Lion stands always before us, how can evil thoughts appear? Even to sin, one needs freedom from anxiety. Constantly thinking of death is a means of avoiding sin. If death is always staring him in the face, with what strength can man commit sin?"

But man trries to push away the thought of death. The French philosopher Pascal says in his *Pensees* ("Thoughts") "As men are not able to fight against death, misery, ignorance, they have taken it into their heads, in order to be happy, not to think of them at all ... To be happy he would have to make himself immortal, but, not being able to do so, it has occurred to him to prevent himself from thinking of death."

"Death is always standing behind us. But man's effort to forget it goes on all the time. He never considers how to live remembering death." Man does not like even the word, "Death." If at dinner the word is uttered, we cut it short saying, 'How inauspicious!" But every step we take is a step that takes us towards death. Once we buy a ticket to Bombay and sit in the

train, though we keep sitting, the train will carry us to Bombay and deliver us there At birth we take a ticket to the destination, death Whether we sit still or run about, death is certain Whether we think of it or do not think of it, it will come However uncertain all other things are, death is certain As the sun sets on the western hill, it has devoured a portion of our life Thus our days decrease, life tapers off, drop by drop the cup is emptied—but man takes no notice of all this Jnaneswar says, "How curious !" He wonders how men could be so thoughtless Man has become so frightened of death that he cannot bear even the thought of it He tries to keep off all thought of it He sits down bandaging his eyes Soldiers going to the front play, dance, sing and smoke, to forget death Pascal writes "The only thing which consoles us for our miseries is diversion, and yet this is the greatest of our miseries For it is this which principally hinders us from reflecting upon ourselves, and which makes us insensibly ruin ourselves Diversion amuses us, and leads us unconsiously to death "

"Though he sees death everywhere, the soldier loses himself in eating and drinking, singing and dancing, all in order to forget it "

We are all like the soldier Keeping a round, laughing face, if it is withered, applying cream and powder, and dyeing grey hair—all this, man does Death is dancing on our chest, but we try endlessly to put it out of our minds We are ready to talk about all other things, but not about death You ask a boy who has just passed his Matriculation, "What do you propose to do ?" He replies, "Don't ask me now, I am only in my first at College " If you ask him again the following year, he would say, "Let me first finish the Intermediate, there will be time enough to worry " And so it goes on But shouldn't one think in advance of the future ? Should not one see the path in front clearly before taking a step, to avoid pitfalls ? But the student shirks this task. What the poor fellow studies only serves to shed darkness on the path ahead So he takes good care not to ask the question what he could do in life He may be surrounded by darkness on all sides, but he cannot prevent what is bound to come, it will surely come about

The Professor of Logic begins Deduction at College "Man is mortal Socrates is a man Therefore Socrates is mortal " But why bring in Socrates, why not cite his own example ? The

Professor too is mortal But he never says, "All men are mortal Therefore I, the Professor, am mortal, and you the students too are mortal" He passes on to Socrates the liability to die, for Socrates, luckily, is already dead He is not likely now to stand up and protest So the teacher and the pupils establish the mortality of Socrates, and as for themselves, enter into a conspiracy of silence They fancy that they have warded off danger thus

In this way, people are all time making heroic efforts to forget death But can one ever get rid of death by such means? Only the other day, when my mother died, death stood before me. But there is a way of conquering death by thinking fearlessly about it, but this way we dare not seek and find A lion purses a deer The nimble deer flees in fright, but soon it gets tired, and its strength fails But Death in the form of the lion pursuses it The state of the poor creature at that moment is indeed pitiable—it cannot even look at the lion It buries its antlers and face in the earth, and stands helpless, as if inviting the lion to come and devour it We too dare not face death But although we try all tricks to run away from it, it is powerful enough to catch us at last by our neck

And when death comes, man takes stock of his life's accounts The stupid and lazy candidate dips his pen in the inkpot and takes it out, but he cannot collect enough courage to blacken the paper My fellow, do you mean to start writing, or don't you? Surely, you don't expect Saraswati to take the pen out of your hand and write for you? Alas, the three hours are over and he folds and submits the paper blank, or with a few lines scrawled on it It does not occur to him to try to understand the questions and answer them He wastes his time looking this way and that Our plight too is no different Therefore, remembering that death is the crown of life, we should constantly practise the means by which we can make our last moments holy, pure and sweet From now on we should think what we should do to impress on our minds the most noble and beautiful *samskaras* But who worries abour acquiring good *samskaras*? Instead of his, day and night, the training in bad ways goes on We teach the tongue, the eyes and the ears to be greedy We should give a far different training to the *chitta*, the mind and heart We should steep and dye the *chitta* in good things From the instant we discover an error, we should try and correct it Once we know it is a mistake, how can

we go on doing it ? The moment we discover a mistake, we are reborn Then begins for us a new childhood, a new dawn in life Now we are truly awake From now should examine our life day and night and walk warily Else we shall slip, and fall into bad habits again

Many years ago I went on a visit to my old grandmother She complained, "Vinya, I remember nothing these days I go to fetch the ghee-pot, and then come back forgetting all about it " But she talked to me about some trouble about a jewel which occured fifty years earlier She could not remember what happened five minutes before but something fifty years old was still fresh in her memory. How to account for this ? She must have been talking about the jewel affair again and again to a great many people—and therefore, it had become a part of her life I prayed within myself, ' Oh God, don't let my grandmother think of the jewel at the time of death !"

(38) Be Forever Steeped in it

The thing we practise day and night sicks to us Let us not be deceived by the story of Ajamila He was to all appearances a sinner, but hidden deep in his life was a stream of holiness This came to the surface at the moment of death If you imagine that you would remember the name of Rama at the last moment, even if you had been a sinner all your life, you are sure to be disappointed You will have to train the mind aright from childhood The constant care that good *samskaras* alone come to the mind Don't say, "What does it matter whether one gets up at four in the morning or at seven ?" Talk of this sort is pointless By letting the mind go as it pleases, you will defeat yourself Then you will never acquire good *samaskaras* We have to accumulate wealth coin by coin, we must gather wisdom without wasting even a moment Watch, therefore, that only good *samarkaras* take root in the mind Any bad word that comes out of your mouth starts an evil *samaskaras* Every act is a stroke that chisels into shape the marble of our life Even if the day passes well, evil thoughts disturb our dreams It is not as if only the affairs of the immediate past appear in dreams So many *samasaaras* lie hidden in our minds behind the veil of forgetfulness We cannot tell when they will come out into the open Therefore, we should be vigilant even over little things A drowing man clutches even at a straw And we are drowing in the ocean of *samsara* If we utter a good word,

even that serves as a support to us A good deed done is never washed, it will take you ashore There should not be even the slightest trace of a bad *samskara* Strive always to keep the eyes pure, the ears clased against blame, the tongue engaged in good speech If you are thus careful, you will draw a good prize at the time of death We will become the masters of life and death

To create such good *samskaras*, let noble thoughts course through the mind Let the hands be busy doing deeds of goodness Thoughts of God within, and the performance of *svadharma* without, the hands performing the *karma* of service and in the mind, *vikarma*, the special action of the mind—these should go on constantly Look at Gandhiji He spins on the charkha every day. He insists on our doing so too But why spin every day ? Is it not enough if we spin now and then for the cloth we need ? But then, this would only be a worldly or secular activity Spinning daily is spiritual, it indicates an inner desire to do what we can for our country The thread we spin binds us day by day with *Daridranarayan* (God in the form of the poor) It strengthens the good association, the *samskara*

The doctor prescribes a medicine to be taken daily by us But what if we drank it up all at once ? It would be too much of a good thing, anyhow, the purpose will not be fulfilled By the continuous good effect of a course of medicine, the faults in nature should be set right The same holds good of life. We perform *abhisheka* (ceremonial bathing) of Siva in a thin continuous stream I am fond of this example I used to see this every day when I was a child If you collect all the water used in twenty-four hours, you might perhaps get two buckets Why not pour the two bucketfuls all at once on Siva's head ? I got the answer to this even as a child If we overturn the bucket in one breath, the *karma* would not bear fruit The flow of the water drop by drop is worship The flow of our *samskaras* should be even and perpetual, like this water of worship In the morning, at noon and again in the evening, by day and by night, the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, the same this year and the next, so too in *janma* after *janma* (birth after birth), the same in life as in death, the divine stream of *samskara*, made up of little drops of action, should flow uninterruptedly, all through one's life It is only when this stream flows unbroken, that we can reach our goal and plant there the flag of victory And this stream of *samskara* should flow

steadily in the same direction Otherwise it would be like water falling on a rock, and scattered in many directions, without ever forming a river On the contrary, if all the water runs in one direction, it becomes a stream and, gathering force as it goes down the mountains, it becomes a mighty river like the Ganga, and mixes with the sea The stream that runs in one direction reaches the sea, but the water that is scattered in many directions soon dries up The same is true of *samskaras* If they come and go, of what use are they ? It is only when the pure stream of *samskaras* flows unbroken through life that the death that comes at its end will appear as a bringer of bliss The traveller who does not tarry by the way, escapes the delusions and temptations that beset him, and walks with firm steps up the step ascent, and reaches the mountain-top, and there throws down the burden on his back, and enjoys the free air that blows there—who but he can experience such joy ? But the sun will not stay for the traveller that dallies by the way

(39) War Day and Night

All this means that when the outward performance of *svadharma* and the purificatory interior action of remembering God go on together, when the stream of *karma* without and *vikarma* within flows continuously, death will be a bringer of joy That is why the Lord says,

"Remember me at all times and fight "

"Tasmaat sarveshu kaaleshu maamanusmara yuddhya cha "

"Steep yourself in Him always " Be forever absorbed in Him When love for the Lord pervades you within and without, and fills the whole of your life, only then will you find a constant joy in holy things Then evil tendencies will not appear before you Beautiful and noble desires sprout in the heart, good deeds come naturally

It is true that, when one always remembers the Lord, good deeds come naturally to one, but the Lord also commands, "Be fighting all the time."

Tukaram says,

"Night and day, within and without, in the heart and in the world, we are at war "

Within and without us spreads a boundless creation With all these created things, the mind is at war without a pause We cannot say that, in this war, victory will be ours in every battle He who wins in the end is the true conqueror It is the final decision that prevails If on many occasions one earns honour, on many others one earns dishonour, Disgrace or defeat is no cause for depondency If after nineteen strokes the stone does not break, but it does at the twentieth stroke, have the first nineteen been wasted ? Did they not make possible the success of the twentieth ?

To lose hope is to become an atheist Have the faith that the Lord is our protector To develop self-confidence in the child, the mother allows it freedom to wander, but she would not let it fall When she sees it about to fall, she rushes to its help The Lord keeps watch over you He holds in His hand the string of your life's kite Sometimes He pulls the string taut, at others leaves it loose, but he sure the string is ever in his hand At the ghats of the Ganga, they teach swimming, a rope is tied to a tree on the bank and the other end to the waist of the learner, before he is thrown into the water But the teacher stands in the water ready to pull him up The novice sinks and rises up a few times, but in the end masters the art of swimming In the same way, the Lord teaches us the art of living

(40) The Bright and the Dark Paths

Therefore, if, with faith in the Lord, you fight day and night, in thought, word and deed, the last moment will be wonderfully perfect Then all the divine powers will favour you It is this lesson that is taught through images at the end of this Section. Understand this image If, at the time of one's death, fire burns, the sun shines, the moon waxes and the sun moves northward through the beautiful cloudless heavens, such a one merges in *brahman* But if smoke piles up, and it darkens within and the moon wanes and the sun moves southward through the dark cloudy sky, such a one gets caught again in the vortex of birth and death

Many people read this and get bewildered If you want a holy death, you should seek the grace of fire, the sun, the moon and the sky Fire is the symbol of *karma* and *yajna*, of work and sacrific Even at the end, the flames of *yajna* should keep burning

Justice Ranade used to say, "He is lucky who dies in the unremitting performance of duty I shall be happy if I die while reading, writting, or working" This is what is meant by saying that "fire is burning" If one is to keep working even at the moment of death, one must have the grace of fire (*agni*) That the intellect shines bright and undimmed until the last moment, is by the sun's grace By the grace of the moon pure *bhavanas* (thoughts and feelings) wax and increase in the mind at the time of death The moon is the god of the mind, of *bhavana* Like the moon ot the bright fortnight, so devotion, love, energy, benevolence, compassion and such pure *bhavanas* should wax and grow perfect in the mind The grace of the sky means that the firmament of the mind is clear of the clounds of desire Once Gandhiji said, "I keep shouting of the charkha day and night I consider the charkha a holy thing And yet, at the last moment, even this concern, this *vasana*, should disappear He who inspired me with this love of the charkha can very well look after it Himself The charkha has now been taken up by many good people I must now give up worrying about the charkha and get ready to join the Lord" The northward journey means that the heart should be free of the clouds of attachment

When the hands perform acts of service till the last breath, the full moon of *bhavana* shines brightly, the mind's sky is free from desire, and the intellect is bright and keen—when a man dies in this state, we may take it that he has merged in the Lord In order to make such an auspicious ending, one must watch day and night and wage skilful war Not even for an instant should an evil tendency be permitted in the mind And in order to gain the strength necessary for this, one should pray constantly to the Lord Again and again, one should remember His name and mediate on His truth

IX

THE KINGLY ART OF SERVICE TO HUMANITY—THE YOGA OF DEDICATION

(41) Knowledge through Direct Experience

These talks of mine are not meant to teach others No doubt those who want to profit from them may surely do so For my part, when I talk on the *Gita*, I regard it as *Ram-nam* As I go on

speaking, it is to me the same experience as uttering the Names of God

Between what I have been saying now and the Ninth Section there is a close connection In this Section is described the rare power of the name of God This Section is placed at the centre of the *Gita*, as the *Gita* itself is at the centre of the *Mahabharata* For many reasons, this Section has been considered holy. It is said Jnanadev, in his final *samadhi*, recited this Section and breathed his last At the very thought of this Section, tears come to my eyes, and my heart is full How great is the gift that Vyasadeva has given to us ! This is his gift not to India alone, but to all mankind What the Lord taught to Arjuna could not be expressed in words But Vyasa, moved by compassion, put it into Sanskrit speech, he clothed in words the ineffable secret At the beginning of this Section the Lord says,

> "Raajavidyaa raajaguhyam pavitram idam uttamam "
>
> "This is the supreme knowledge, the supreme secret, the highest and the purest "

And this unique knowledge is something to be experienced directly The Lord says it is "*pratyakshaavagama,*" knowledge to be realised by oneself—a knowledge which is beyond words, but which has been tested on the touchstone of direct experience That is why it is so sweet, Tulsidas has said

> "Who knows who will go to Yama's abode, and who to the higher world, the home of the gods ?
> To Tulsi it seems best to live on this earth as
> Rama's slave "

It is the sweetness of living in the service of Rama that is found in this Section What can be experienced in this body, seen directly with these eyes, enjoyed here and now in this life is described here When we eat sugar, its sweetness is directly experienced The sweetness of living as Rama's servant is experienced in the same direct manner here The supreme knowledge which reveals to us the sweetness in this mortal life is the subject of this Section Though this knowledge is a hidden secret, the Lord opens it out for all to understand with ease

(42) The Easy Way

The *Gita* is the essence of the Vedic *dharma*, that is, the way of life derived from the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* are considered to be older than all the other Scriptures in the world. That is why enthusiasts call them "*anadi*", uncreated. Thus, the *Vedas* are accorded special reverence. Even if we approach them from the historical point of view, they are the most ancient expression of the earliest experiences of our race. These literary records are more valuable than copper-plates, stone inscriptions, coins, vessels and the remains of animals. The earliest historical evidence in the world is provided by the *Vedas*. The *dharma* which was but a seed in the *Vedas* grew and became a tree and yielded at last the sweet fruit of the *Gita*. What else but the fruit of the tree can we eat? It is only when the tree yields fruit that we get something to eat. The *Gita* is the twice-distilled essence of the Vedic *dharma*.

In this Vedic *dharma*, which had grown from the most ancient times, are mentioned various *yagas* and *yajnas*, rites and rituals, many penances and practices. This Section of Observance is not useless, but it requires a fitness in the doer. To acquire this was not easy for every one. Who is to climb up the tall coconut tree, pluck the fruit, remove the fibre, break it and get at the kernel? However hungry I may be, what use is the fruit up there in the tree to me? I look up at the coconut and the coconut looks down at me. How can it quench the fire of my hunger, until it reaches my hands? These various rites were filled with subtle ideas. How could the common folk comprehend them? There is no *moksha* except through the Vedic path, but few had the fitness to study the Vedas. What happens to the others, then? Hence the saints, filled with compassion, came forward saying, "Come, we shall take out the essence of the Vedas. We shall give it to the world in a simple form." Tukaram sings,

"Infinite are the Vedas, but this is their 'substance.'"

What is that substance? The Name of the Lord. The Name of the Lord is the essence of the *Vedas*. It is certain that through *Ramanama* one can attain *moksha*, which means that *moksha* has become easy for women, children, *sudras*, *vaisyas*, the rustic and the poor, the weak, the sick and the lame, indeed for everyone. The *moksha* that lay locked up in the Vedas as in a

strong box, the Lord has broght out and placed at the cross-roads What a direct and easy way to *moksha* ! One's ordinary life, what one does as *svadharma*, one's acts of service, why not make this itself a *yajna*, a sacrifice ? Where is the need for any other sacrifice, any *yagas* or *yajnas* ? Regard as a *yajna*, and continue to perform, the ordinary work of service that you do every day This is the royal road

> "yam aasthaaya naro raajan na pramaadyeta karhichit dhaavan nimiilya vaa netre na skhalet na patet iha "

> "On which, even if you run with closed eyes, there is on danger of stumbling or falling "

The other path is like a razor's edge, sharp and difficult to travers -"*kshurasya dhaaraa nisitaa duratyayaa*," the Vedic way is sharper and more perilous than the edge of a sword How much easier is the way of service to Rama The engineer makes the gradient so gentle that we reach the top almost unaware that we are climbing This is the merit of the royal road too Where the man stands and works, through that ordinary task, he is able to reach to Supreme—such is this method

Does the Lord hide Himself somewhere, in some cave or crevice, in some river or in some heaven ? Diamonds and rubies, gold and silver, lie hidden in the bowels of the earth, pearls and corals in the depths of the sea But is this gem, the Lord, hidden somewhere ? Have we to dig Him up ? Why, He stands all the time before all of us Everyone here is a manifestation of the Lord The Lord says, "Do not dishonour the person of the Lord manifest in human form, my brother " It is the Lord that appears as all things moving and unmoving Where is the need for artificial aids to seek and find Him ? The way is straight and easy Relate to the Lord whatever service you perform, that is enough Become Rama's servant No doubt those arduous Vedic processes, the *yajna*, the *svaha*, the *svadha*, the *sraddha*, the *tarpana* (Vedic rituals), will take us towards *moksha* But they raise the problem of the fit and the unfit We need none of it, Do just this much Whatever you do, dedicate to the Lord Relate to Him every act of yours This is what the Ninth Section teaches Hence it is most dear to *bhaktas*

(43) No Question of Fitness

The most charming part of Krishna's life is his childhood It is Bala-Krishna, the young Krishna, that we cherish in our hearts and worship He goes out with other cowherd boys grazing cattle, he eats and laughs and plays with them When they set out to worship Indra he told them, "Who has seen Indra ? How has he helped us ? But this Govardhan hill stands here before our eyes Our cattle graze on its slopes Streams flow from it Let us, therefore, worship it " Such things he taught them To his cowherd companions, to the *gopis* with whom he laughed and talked, to the cows and calves he rejoiced in, to them all he openen the door of *moksha* The Supreme Lord Krishna has shown us in experience this easy way He moved with cows and calves in his childhood, with horses when he grew up On hearing the music of his flute the cows went into ecstasy, the horses thrilled to the touch of his hand as he stroked them The cows and calves, the chariot-horses, were filled with Krishna, became one with Him Even those creatures, supposed to be born in sin, attained *moksha* Sri Krishna made it clear that not only men but animals and birds had the right to *moksha* He proved it in practice in His life

Krishna's experience was Vyasa's too Krishna and Vyasa are one The essence of their lives is the same *Moksha* does not depend upon one's learning or performance of rites All it needs is straight and simple *bhakti* While learned men who "I, I," are left behind, innocent and devout women go forward When the mind is pure and the heart full of simplicity and holiness, *moksha* is not difficult to attain There is a Section in the *Mahabharata* describing the conversation between Janaka and Sulabha Vyasa creates a situation where Janaka approaches a woman to learn wisdom from her You may go on discussing whether women have the right to study the Vedas, but here we see before our eyes Sulabha teaching divine wisdom to King Janaka She is an ordinary woman, and he an emperor and a profound scholar But the wise Janaka had not attained *moksha* And so Vyasa sends him to fall at the feet of Sulabha The story of the *Vaisya* (merchant) Tuladhar is similar The brahmin Jalali goes to him in search of wisdom Tuladhar tells him "All my wisdom consists in holding the scales even " Similar too is the story of the hunter He killed animals and sold meat This was how he served

society An arrogant brahmin ascetic was asked by his *guru* to approach the hunter and learn wisdom from him. The brahmin wondered, "What can this butcher teach me ?" Still he went to him and saw him cutting the meat, washing it and displaying it for sale He said to the brahmin, "Look, I am doing this work as well as I can, making it a form of *dharma* I pour all my soul into this work, and serve my parents " In the form of this hunter Vyasadeva puts before us an ideal man

The purpose of introducing into the *Mahabharata* these stories about a woman, a *vaisya* and a *sudra* is to make it clear that the doors of *moksha* are open to all It is this truth that is taught in the Ninth Section It sets the seal of approval on these stories The joy of living in Rama's service was found in the hunter's life Tukaram was a lover of *ahimsa* but he describes with gusto the story of Sajan the butcher who found *moksha* by being a butcher. Tukaram asks elsewhere, "Lord, what salvation is there for those who kill animals ?" But he writes, ' With the butcher Sajan He sells meat," and thus says that the Lord was a friend and helper of the butcher The Lord who rolls paper for Narsi Mehta, who carries water for the water-carrier Ekanath, who helps the cobbler Damaji in his shoe-making, who helps Janabai, beloved of the Maharashtrians, in pounding and grinding grain, that same Lord also helps the butcher Sajan with the same love, says Tukaram The moral is that we should surrender all our actions to the Lord If the action is filled with pure *bhavana,* with the attitude of service, it becomes a *yajna*

(44) Dedicate to the Lord the Fruit of Action

It is this important truth which is described in the Ninth Section, where *karma-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga* are beautifully blended *Karma-yoga* means doing the action, but renouncing the fruit Act with such skill that the fragrance of the fruit, the desire for reward, does not touch the mind It is like planting a walnut tree The walnut tree takes twenty-five years to yield fruit The man who plants it rarely gets the chance of eating in his own lifetime the fruit of the tree he planted And yet he has to plant and water and look after the tree lovingly *Karma-yoga* means planting and minding the tree but not desiring the fruit What is *bhakti-yoga* ? It means becoming one with the Lord through devotion In *raja-yoga,* both *karma* and *bhakti* are combined,

Raja-yoga has been explained by different people in different ways But I should describe it briefly as a beautiful combination of *karma-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga*

Let us perform action, and not throw away the fruit but dedicate it to God To throw away the fruit would be to reject it, but dedication is different What a lovely arrangement ! There is a wonderful sweetness in it Renouncing the fruit does not mean that no one would get the benefit of it It will reach someone or the other, someone or the other will surely receive it Then the question may arise whether he who gets the benefit deserves it If a beggar comes to our door, we say, "You are strong and study Why should you beg ? Get away " We consider whether it is right or wrong for him to beg The poor fellow is ashamed and goes away There is no trace of fellow-feeling in our heart Further, how are we to determine the deserts of the man who begs ? Once, in my childhood, I expressed such a doubt to my mother, and the answer she gave me then is still ringing in my ears I told her, "This beggar is hale and healthy If we give him alms, we should be only encouraging laziness and bad habits " And I went on to quote the words from the Gita, "*dese kaale cha paatre cha*," (in the right place, at the right time, to the deserving person) She answered, "He who has come to beg is none else than the Lord Now you may decide whether he is fit to receive your alms Or would you say that the Lord is not fit ? What right have you and I to judge of fitness ? I see no need for all this questioning To me he is the Lord " And to this day I do not know any argument that will meet this answer

I consider fitness when it is a question of feeding another, but when it comes to filling my own stomach, the thought of fitness doesn't occur to me The man who comes to our door for food, why should we look on him as just a beggar ? Why should I not see that, when I give something to someone, I am giving it to God *Raja-yoga* says, ' The benefit of your *karma* goes to someone, doesn't it ? If so, give it over to the Lord, dedicate it to Him " *Raja-yoga* points out the proper recipient There is no negative action of renouncing the fruit in *raja-yoga*, and since everything is dedicated to the Lord, the question of fitness or unfitness is eliminated The gift that is offered to the Lord is always pure Even if there are impurities in your action, it will become pure when it reaches His hands However hard we try to make our actions

perfect, there will still be some shortcomings Nevertheless, let us act with the utmost possible purity The intellect is God's gift It is our duty to use it in as pure a form as possible It would be a sin not to do so So we should think of fitness and unfitness, but the decesion becomes easy when you are devoted to the Lord

For attaing purity of mind, we should give away the fruit Dedicate to the Lord every action as it takes shape As actions take shape before our eyes, dedicate them then and there to the Lord and be content We do not give up the fruit, we only give it over to the Lord Why only the fruit, even the *vasanas,* the tendencies that arise in the mind, and the deformations like lust and anger—place them all at the feet of the Lord, and be free from care

"My lust and my anger, I surrender to Vitthal,"

Here there is no need to torture oneself in the fire of self-control Surrender promptly and find freedom No holding down or cutting off

"If the sickness can be curred by milk and sugar, why drink the bitter juice of *neem* ?" The senses also are means for our use Dedicate them to the Lord People complain that the ears do not listen to such good advice Are we then to close our ears ? No, we should keep them open, but only to stories of Hari It is difficult to keep the ears from hearing But it is very easy, it is pleasant and profitable, to make them listen to stories of Hari Give your ears to Rama Use your mouth to utter Rama's name The senses are not enemies They are our friends Their power for good is boundless Therefore, the best and noblest way to use every one of the senses is with the intellect surrounded to the Lord This is called *raja-yoga*

(45) No Need for Special Activity

It is not as if we should dedicate to the Lord only particular kinds of action We should dedicate to him all our action as such. With what love Rama accepted the fruit offered by Sabari ! One need not go and sit in a cave to worship God Whatever action you perform, wherever you may perform it, surrender it to God The mother waiting on her child waits of God When she bathes her child, she is performing *Rudra-abhisheka* for God The mother, regarding the child as a gift from God, should tend it with devotion How tenderly did Kaushalaya care for Rama and

Yasoda for Krishna Suka, Valmiki and Tulsides consider themselves lucky in describing this tenderness and do it with unbounded enthusiasm The mother's act of tender care is indeed noble What greater fortune could come to her than serving the image of the Lord, her child ? When we serve each other, if only we did it with this attitude, how would our actions be transformed ! We should have the *bhavana* that whatever work comes to us, it is the service of the Lord himself

The farmer serves his bullock Is the bullock to be despised ? No, the bull that Vamadeva in the *Vedas* describes as pervading the universe in the form of *sakti* (energy), is present in the farmer's bullock too

> "chatvaari srngaa trayo asya paadaa
> dve sirshe sapta hastaaso asya
> tridhaa baddho vrshabho roraviiti
> maho devo martyaan aavivesa "

"The bull which has four horns, three legs, two heads and seven hands is bound in three places and, becoming mighty in splendour, pervades all mortal things It is this same bull that roars and fills the universe which the farmer worship " The commentators have interpreted this passage in a variety of ways And this bullock too is wounderful ! The bull that roars in the heavens and pours down the rains is present in the farmer's bullock which drops down dung and urine to fertilise the field If a farmer serves his cattle with this noble *bhavana*, even this ordinary work of his becomes worship of the Lord

In the same way, the mistakes of the household tries to feed and please the family by keeping the kitchen clean, lighting the fire and preparing pure and wholesome food, and all these acts of hers are *yajna*, sacrificial action Is this a mere oven, is it not a sacrificial fire kindled by the mother ? How pure and holy the food will be when it is cooked with the *bhavana* of pleasing the Lord—just think of it If the *grahalakshmi* ("the goddess of the household') is inspired by such noble thoughts and feelings, we should think of her as belonging to the race of the *rishipatkis* (the wives of the *rishis*) described in the *Bhagavata* While ever so many mothers have attained *moksha* through service, scholars and learned men who are thinking of themselves all the time are cost in corners

uncared for

(46) All Life can be Filled with God

The moments of our daily life may appear commonplace, but in reality they are not so, they carry enormous significance. All one's life is a great *yajna-karma,* a continual sacrificial performance What is sleep ? It is a kind of *samadhi,* an experience of oneness If we surrender all our enjoyments to the Lord before we fall asleep, what is sleep but *samadhi* ? There is a custom among us of reciting the *Purushasukta* while taking a both Now what is the connection between the *Purushasukta* and a bath ? You will surely see it if you try What is the connection between the *virat purusha,* the Cosmic Person, with his thousand hands and thousand eyes, and this my bath ? The connection is that, in the pitcher of water that you pour down of your head, there are thousands of drops. Those drops wash your head—they rid you of your head The thousands hands of the Lord are pouring a thousand streams on your head Through these drops the Lord Himself is purifying your mind and heart. If you pour this divine *bhavana* into this act, the bath will assume a new quality and acquire a boundless power

Any action performed with this *bhavana,* that is, a feeling that it is God's work, becomes a sacrament, this has been tested by experience Assume for a while that the visitor to your house is the Lord himself When, in the ordinary course, a distinguished guest is expected in our house, how we clean and polish and what a grand feast do we prepare ! But if we think that the Lord Himself is the guest, would it not make a vast difference to our feelings ? Kabir was busy at his loom, he was absorbed in his work and sang

"jhini jhini jhini jhini bini chadariya "

He forgot himself as if he were weaving a *chaddar* for the Lord The *rishi* of the *Rgveda* says —

vastreva bhadraa sukrtaa supanii

I offer this my hymm like a garment woven well by lovely hands to the Lord The poet makes his songs for the Lord's sake And he who spins and weaves cloth, he too does it for the Lord's

sake Here is a thought to touch the heart, to purify and exhilarate Once this *bhavana* comes into our life, how flawless would our days become ! When the light flashes in darkness, does not the darkness disappear instantaneously ? Is it destroyed gradually ? No, in one instant the whole thing within and without is tranformed In the same way, the moment we relate every action to the Lord, at once, a wonderful new energy flaws into our life Every action becomes pure We are filled with enthusiasm Where is the zest in our life today ? We are alive only become we are not yet dead There is a dearth of enthusiasm all round, Life is dark, ugly and full of sorrow But, just for a while, let the mind consider that all our actions are for all the sake of the Lord Then we will realise how full of beauty and value our lives become

There is no doubt that one name of God transforms life at once Don't say what good can the word "Rama" do Just try saying it and see what happens In the evening, after his day's work, the farmer returns home On the way he meets a traveller, and says to him—

"The night is falling, Narayana, come home with me " As the farmer says, "Brother traveller, Oh Narayana, stop for a while It is night, Lord, come to my house," his word changes the traveller, does it not ? Even if he is a *dacoit* or a robber, he is transformed into a friend This conversian is due to the *bhavana*, such is the power of *bhavana* to transform all things *Bhavana* is the substance of life A strange lad of twenty comes to the house The father gives him his daughter The old man touches the feet of the youngster—what does this mean ? How holy is this act of giving away a daughter ! He who accepts the gift is regarded as God himself This *bhavana* which we take on a son-in-law let us carry it further and higher

Some may object, "What do we gain by making these false suppositions ?" But I would say "Don't start with such talk of truth and falsehood Practise it first, and gain experience of it, then you will know what is true and what is false If at the marriage ceremony you do not merely say in words, but feel at heart, that the bridegroom is the Lord Himself, you will realise what a great difference this makes As a result of this holy *bhavana*, the object will change so much that its later from will differ from its earlier as heaven from earth The undeserving becomes deserving, and the evil good Was is not in this way that

Balya (Valmiki) the hunter was converted ? There in the forest, the sage Narada's fingers dance on the strings of the *vina*, he sings the name of Narayana, the robber Balya runs towards him to kill him. Even then, his calm undisturbed, the sage looks on him with eyes full of love Never till now had Balya seen such a thing He had seen only two kinds of animal—one which fled from his bow and arrow and another which turned round on him and attacked him But Narada neither fled nor flared up at sight of him, but stood there at peace Balya's bow and arrow stood still Narada would neither raise his brow nor shut his eyes The music went on sweetly as there He asked the robber, "Why does your arrow stop ?" Balya answered, "At the sight of your peace" Narada had transformed Balya Was the change true or false ?

Who is to decide that a man is bad ? Even if a really bad person appears before you, think that he is the Lord Himself Even the villain will become a saint Then, are we to imagine such falsehold ? But I say, who can be certain that the man is wicked ? Some say, "Good people, being good themselves, see nothing but goodness around them But in fact, this is not true" Should the world then accept as true only what you see, and nothing else ? Are we then to suppose that it is only the bad people who have the means to take the full measure of creation ? Why not say that there is nothing wrong with creation, but it appears bad to you because of badness in you ? Look, creation is but a mirror What you are and what you bring to this mirror, the image of this you see in the world It is the eye of the beholder that determines the form of the world Therefore, approach all certain with the feeling that it is good, that it is pure Carry the same *bhavana* to all your ordinary actions Then you will see a miraculous change This is what the Lord means us to understand when He says —

> "yatkaroshi yadasnaasi yajjuhoshi dadaasi yat
> yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurushva madarpanam"

"Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever rites or austerities you perform, whatever you give, do it, O son of Kunti, as an offering to me."

What you do, such as it is, dedicate it all to the Lord

When I was a child, my mother used to tell me a story It is a funny little story, but it contains a profound secret There was a girl who was resolved that everything she did should go to

Krishna After cleaning the oven in the kitchen with a mixture of clay and cowdung, she made what was left into a ball and threw it out, saying, "*Krishnaarpanamastu,*" "May Krishna accept it" What happened was that the ball of cowdung used to rise into the air and, flying into temple, stick on the face of the image of the Lord. The priest, poor fellow, got tired cleaning up the image He did not know what to do At last he discovered that this was all due to the girl. As long as the girl was alive, the image could not be kept clean One day the girl fell sick She was about to die She dedicated her death also to Krishna The image in the temple fell to pieces The heavenly chariot came to fetch her—but this too she dedicated to Krishna The chariot dashed against the temple and was smashed up Even heaven is reduced to nothing before the thought of Krishna

The meaning of it all is that whatever actions we do, whether good or bad, a new dimension of power enters into them the moment we surrender them to the Lord The grains of maize are reddish yellow in colour, but when maize is parched in sand, what good popcorn it becomes ! What a difference between the dainty popcorn, white and soft, and the hard grain ! But there is no doubt that the one has become the other, and the change is due to the fire Likewise, if you grind this hard grain in a mill, it becomes soft flour As contact with firse makes it flowerlike, and grinding in the mill makes it into soft flour, so even the smallest actions are transformed when they are passed through the process of dedication to God By this *bhavana,* this feeling, their value is raised Do not desire the common *gudel* flower, the *bel* leaf, the tender *tulasi* leaf and the *dub* grass—

"Tuka says, by association with Vitthal, sweetness comes to it"

Associate everything with the Lord, and then taste it afresh Where is the spice to equal Rama ? Add this divine *masala* to everything you do, so it will become beautiful and tasty

During the evening worship at the temple, when the smoke of incense rises, lamps are lit, and the burning camphor is waved before the image, we feel indeed the presence of the Lord before our eyes All day He was awake, and how it is time for Him to go to sleep The devotees put Him to sleep with the lullaby—

"Sweetly sleep, my Gopala, my sweet one, sleep"

A sceptic asks, "Does your God sleep too ?"

My dear man, what does God not do ? If the Lord does not sleep and wake can the stone then sleep and wake ? My friend, it is the Lord that sleeps and wakes, it is He that eats and drinks As the day dawns, Tulasidas wakes the Lord, sings and prays to the Lord

"Wake up, O Lord of the Raghus, my child, the birds are singing in the woods "

Tulasidas looks on all his brothers and sisters, all the men and women in the world, as Ramachandra Himself and says to them "My Ramas, my kings, arise," What a beautiful idea ! For a contrast, let us take a hostel where they wake up the boys, shouting, "Get up, you sleepy-heads " Is this rude shouting in harmony with the auspicious morning hour ? Young Rama is asleep in Visvamitra's *asram* And this is how, according to Valmiki, the teacher awakens the pupil,

"Raama iti madhuraam vaaniim visvaamitro abhyabhaashata
uttishtha narasaarduula puurvaa sandhyaa pravartate "

Thus, in a sweet voice, Visvamitra says, "Rama my child, the sky is brightening in the east, get up, O tiger among men " What a difference between in the *Asram* and the modern hotel ! Why should the poor sleeping led feel it is his foe through seven births that wakes him up ? First whisper, then speak a little louder, but never be rough or rude If he does not wake up, try again after ten minutes If he does not get up in time today, be sure he will do so tommorow Sing to him songs of the sunrise, sons of praise You may think that walking up a sleeper is an ordinary job, but we can fill even that with poetry, with feeling and beauty We should wake him up as if he were God asleep Yes, we should be gentle in rousing the image of God Walking up a sleeper is also an art

Inform all your actions with this idea Indeed, this idea is essential to teaching What are children but the images of God ? The teacher should be filled with the *bhavana* that he is rendering service to these gods If he did, he would never bawl out at them, "Get out ! Stand up for an hour ! Hold out your hand ! How dirty your clothes are ! Go and clean your nose !" He would, instead, gently wipe the child's nose, he would wash and mend his clothes If the teacher does so, what a change there will be ! Whoever

heard of any good coming out of beating and curely ? Students too should regard their teachers with the same divine *bhavana* Teachers should look on their pupils as gods, and so too should the pupils regard their teachers If this mutual *bhavana* is established, how brightly would knowledge shine ! Indeed, the boys are the Lord, and so is the teacher ! If only pupils feel "This is not just a schoolmaster, this is the Lord Siva himself We are drinking in the nectar of His teaching, let us enlighten our understanding by service to Him," we can well imagine how they would behave towards him

(47) No Fear of Sin

Once the *bhavana* settles in the mind that the Lord is a shining presence everywhere, the ethics of our mutual relations will spring of its own accord in the heart There is no need to look for it in books Then all defects will vanish, sin will flee, and the darkness of evil disappear

Tukaram has said —

> "Be free and bold, take now the divine name of Vitthal,
> He will come to you, and sin will cease to be "

Well, then, you are free to sin if you wish ! I shall see whether you get tired of sinning first, or *Ramanama* gets tired of destroying your sins Which is the sin powerful enough to stand against the Lord's name ? "Sin as much as you like", a charter of freedom is given to you Let the Lord's name and your sins fight it out My dear man the Name has the power to reduce to ashes in a moment all the sins not merely of the present life, but of countless *janmas* No matter how ancient the darkness is in a cave, it flees when a match is struck The darkness becomes light The older the sin, the more quickly it is destroyed, because it is old and must perish It is old fuel that burns to ashes soon.

No sin can stand near *Ramanama* Do not children say that ghosts vanish when you say "Rama" ? When I was young, we used to challenge each other to go to the burning ground at dead of night and drive in a peg there There would be snakes and thorns on the way, and darkness all round, but nothing daunted me No ghost ever appeared Ghosts are creations of the mind, why then would we see them ? Where did the boy of ten gain the courage to visit the cremation ground ? From *Ramanama*

This is the glory of the Lord who is the image of truth If you have the *bhavana* that the Lord is always by your side, then you, His servant, will know no fear even if the whole world turns upside down Which demon can eat you up ? The demon may eat and digest the body, but not the truth There is no power on earth that can destroy truth Not for a moment can sin stand before the name of the Lord Therefore, turn your heart towards God Attain His grace Dedicate all actions to Him Become altogether His If you strengthen the *bhavana* that all actions should be offered up to the Lord this sordid life will become divine, the commonplace will become beautiful

(46) Little but Sweet

"*Patram pushpam phalam toyam,*" a leaf, a flower, a fruit, a little water, whatever it is, *bhakti* makes the offering complete. The question is not how much you give, but with what *bhavana* Once I was talking to a professor about a problem in teaching We happened to differ Finally he said, "Sir, I've been at this job for eighteen years " When, instead of convincing me, he cited his long experience, I said in fun "Sir, if for eighteen years a bullock is yoked to an oil mill, does it become an engineer ?" It is one thing to go round and round blindly like a bullock and quite another to understand the science of engineering A man may carry for year the burden of teaching and yet not understand the art of teaching The knowledge that a scientist can acquire in six months, a porter cannot in eighteen years The professor might have grown grey teaching, but that proves nothing So also, there is no value in the quantity of the stuff you pile up before the Lord There, the question is not about size or shape or price, but only about the *bhavana*, not what or how much we offer, but how, in what spirit, we offer it There are only 700 *slokas* in the *Gita* there are other works with as many as 10,000 But we cannot say that because a thing is big, it is, therefore, better What we should look for is the power, the energy it has The number of actions in life is not important Even a single action performed in a spirit of dedication to the Lord will bring us the fullness of experience Sometimes in one holy moment an experience comes to us which in the ordinary course we cannot acquire in a stretch of years

The essence of the matter is that, if we give over to the Lord

all our actions, then life acquires strength and skill from this, and *moksha* is within our grasp To perform action, without renouncing the fruit, to surrender it to the Lord, this is *raja-yoga* This takes us a step beyond *karma yoga* *Karma-yoga* says, "Perform action Renounce the fruit, do not desire it " And there it stops *Raja-yoga* says, "Do not give up the fruit, but surrender all your actions to the Lord They are flowers, they are means to carry you heavenward, offer them to the image of the Lord With action on one side and devotion on the other, combining both *karma* and *bhakti*, make your life more and more beautiful Do not renounce the fruits They are not to be thrown away, but dedicated to the Lord " The fruit that is cut off from action in *karma-yoga*, is re-united with it in *raja-yoga*, When you sow the seed, you do not throw it away What you sow, be it ever so little, will increase and yield infinite fruit, What you throw away is wholly lost The action dedicated to the Lord is like a seed sown It fills our life with endless joy and holiness

X

CONTEMPLATION OF THE DIVINE GLORY

(49) The First Half of the Gita A Retrospect

Friends, we have completed the first half of the *Gita* Before we proceed to the second, it is good to look back In the First Section it was made clear that the *Gita* aims at destroying delusion and making us pursue *swadharma* We saw in the Second Section the basic principles of life, the way of action and the image of the *sthitaprajna* (the steadfast seer) *Karma*, *vikrma* and *akarma* were described in the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sections *Karma* means the performance of *svadharma*, *vikarma* means the inward action which is performed to support the outward action performed as *svadharma* When *karma* and *vikarma* become one, the mind and heart are purified and cleansed, the cravings we have acquired weaken, passions are stilled, feelings of difference vanish and then the state of *akarma* is reached This state of *akarma*, it has been said, is of two kinds In one, you feel, though you work day and night, that you are not working of all, in the other, though you work not at all, you work unceasingly Though these two kinds appear different, they are in their perfection one.

Though the names *karma-yoga* and *sannyasa* are different, the truth at the heart of both is the same The state of *akarma* is the final stage, the ultimate goal This state is called *'moksha*" Thus in the first five Section the philosophy of life has been fully set out

After this, from the Sixth Section onwards, are described the more important methods of *vikarma* useful for cleansing the mind from within and attaining the ideal state of *akarma* The Sixth Section describes the means to one-pointendness,—meditation, and as aids to meditation, practice (*abhyasa*) and detachment (*vairagya*) The Seventh Section teaches us the noble and comprehensive means of devotion (*bhakti*) Go to the Lord with love go in search of knowledge, go seeking the good of the world, go for your personal need—go for whatever reason, only reach His presence once I give this Section the title of *prapatti-yoga*, the *yoga* that impels you to surrender to the Lord This surrender has to be constantly practised, the *yoga* of Constancy (*satatyh-yoga*) is found in the Eighth Section You will not find these names in the books, but they have been useful to me *Satatya-yoga* means continuing one's *sadhana* to the end of one's life The road that we have set out on, we should tread without stopping till we reach the end There is no hope of ever reaching the goal if we walk how and when we like We should never grow disgusted or despondent and complain, "How long are we to go on doing this *sadhana* ?" Till we attain the fruit, the *sadhana* should continue without pause

Having introduced us to *satatya-yoga*, the *yoga* of Constancy, the Lord, in the Ninth Chapter, teaches us a truth commonplace in itself, but capable of transforming the whole quality of life—and this is *raja-yoga* The Ninth Section tells us to dedicate to Krishna all that we do from moment to moment In this one truth is concentrated all arts and skills, all *karma* and *vikarma* All practices, all methods of action lie hidden in the *yaga* of dedication This practice of dedication is *raja-yoga*, all practices find fulfilment here This comprehensive and all-powerful *sadhana* of dedication may seem easy and commonplace, but it is in reality hard This *sadhana* is easy because anyone, from a rustic to a scholar, can perform it without much effort each in his own house and station. But easy though it is, it requires extra-ordinary merit to pursue it

"Through much practice in virtue
I have come to love Vitthal."

It is only when the merits of many births accumulate that our hearts are drawn towards God. The most trivial things bring tears to our eyes, but not the name of God. What is to be done? In one sense, as the saints say, this *sadhana* is easy. But in another sense, it is also difficult, and it has become all the more difficult in modern times.

Today, the film of materialism obscures our wisdom. Instead of beginning with an invocation to Ganesa, we begin with the question, "Does God exist anywhere?" And no one of course sees Him anywhere. Life is full of passion and greed, full of distortions. The best of our philosophers today cannot rise beyond the thought of finding food for everybody. This is no fault of theirs, because as things are at present, many lack even food. Today's main problem is food. Our best brains are busy solving it. Sayanacharya, the commentator of the Vedas, says, "*bubhukshamaanah rudrai upena avatishthate*"—"hungry He oppears in the form of Rudra."

Hungry people are *avatars* of Rudra. To appease their hunger, many philosophical and political theories have arisen. We cannot lift our head a moment from these problems. All our *bhagiratha-prayatna*, all our heroic efforts, today, are towards this end of enabling people to eat their food in peace and comfort. If in such a strange social order, even something as straight and easy as dedication to the Lord becomes very difficult, what is there to wonder at? What then is one to do? How to master the *yoga* of dedication to the Lord, how to make it easy—this is what we are going to see in the Tenth Section.

(50) An Easy Way to Learn to See God

The methods we employ to teach children how to read, these same methods this Section employs to teach us to see God everywhere. We teach children the alphabet in two different ways. One method is to introduce the latters by writing them big and, after they have learnt to recognise them, to reduce their size. It is the same 'A' and the same 'B', only, the letters were big then and are small now. This is one method. The other method is to teach the easy letters first and the complicated ones later. In just

these ways we should learn to see God First, we should see His presence clearly in the big things The Lord manifest in mighty natural objects like the sea and the mountain catches our eyes at once Once we have learnt to recognise the Supreme in these vast manifestations, once we have seen these mighty forms of God, we shall recognise that every drop of water and every grain of sand is filled with the same God There is no difference in meaning between the huge 'A' and the small 'A'—between the gross and the subtle This is one way In the second method we first recognise the supreme forms that are directly and easily seen, and then go on to more complicated forms When the Lord is present in a natural way in a person, we recognise Him easily For example, the divinity manifest in Rama easily impresses itself on our mind Rama is an easy letter to learn, in Him, we see God clearly But what about Ravana ? This is not a simple letter but a combination, not pure gold but an alloy Ravana's penance and merit are indeed great, but they are mixed with cruelty First learn the simple letter, Rama Compasionate, loving and lovable, Rama is an easy God to know and make our own But to recognise the God who is in Ravana, it takes some time First the simple, then the complicated letter We should train ourselves first to see the Lord in good people, and later on in those not so good The immense Being which we behold in the ocean is also present in the little drop of water The Lord who is in Ramachandra is in Ravana too What is found in the gross is present in the subtle, what is found in the sample is present in the complex By these two methods we should learn to read the book of this world

This vast creation is the Lord's Book Because a thick veil covers our eyes it looks as though the book is closed In this Book of Creation the Lord is written down every where in beautiful letters But we do not understand it There is a big obstacle to our seeing the Lord That is, man does not recognise the Lord in the ordinary simple forms that are near him, the distant dazzling forms are too overpowering If you tell him, 'See the Lord in your mother," he would say, "Is the Lord so simple and innocent ?" But if the Supreme Lord appears in all His splendour, can you endure the sight ? Kunti wished to see the distant sun face to face, near and direct, but as he approached she could not bear the heat If the Lord comes and stands

before us in the fullness of His power, we cannot stand it, if He comes in the gentle homely form of one's mother, He fails to command our respect. Rich sweets are indigestible, plain milk is unpalatable. These are symptoms of misfortune and death. It is this sick mind that stands as an obstacle to our seeing the Lord. It is essential to get rid of this state of mind. First let us read the Lord that is near, concrete, easy, and then go on to the subtle and the complicated forms.

(51) God in Human Form

The familiar form in which God first appears to us is our own mother. The Veda says, "*matr devo bhava*." "Let your mother be your God." Who but the mother does the newborn child see? The Lord Himself stands there as the embodiment of tenderness. It is this worship of the mother that we would carry to love of country when we sing "*vande mataram*" and then to love of the universal Mother Earth. And yet in the beginning the first image of the Lord Supreme that comes before the child is the mother. It is not impossible to attain *moksha* through the worship of the mother. What is worship of the mother but worship of the Lord as love incarnate—the mother is only the occasion and the symbol. The Lord pours into her His love and tenderness and impels her from within. The poor woman does not understand whence this passion and attachment wells up in her heart. Does she cherish the child reckoning that he would be useful to her in her old age? Not at all. She gave birth to the child. She went through agony. Those pains have made her mad for the child, have made him all the dearer to her. Without loving him she cannot live. How can she help loving him? The mother is the embodiment of boundless service. Worshipping the mother is the noblest form of worship. Call God by the name of "Mother." What noble name is there? In the book of life, the big unfading letter that we read is "Mother." Learn to see God in her. Then see, Him in the father, and in the teacher. The teacher gives us knowledge, he transforms us from animals into men. How great is his service! First the mother, then the father, then the teacher and then the compassionate ones, the saints. First see the Lord in these

concrete forms before us If the Lord is not to be seen here, where else can He be seen ?

Mother, father, teacher, saint— see the Lord in them If, in the same way, we learn to see the Lord in little children, how we should rejoice ! Dhruva, Prahlada, Nachiketa, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara—were they not all children ? But the authors of the Puranas, Vyasa and the rest, did not know where to place them, what to do with them Sukadeva and Sankaracharya were free of desire even from childhood And so too was Jnanadev All of them were children ! But nowhere is the Lord manifest in such clear pure form as in these children. Lord Jesus loved children dearly Once His disciples asked Him "You speak so much about the Kingdom of God Who can enter it ?" He lifted a child standing by and set him on a table and said, "Of such is the Kingdom of God To enter therein, one must become as a little child " What Jesus said is true Swami Ramdas was once playing with children. Some grown-up people who observed Samarth, the saint, romping with the children, were surprised One of them asked, "What has come over you today ?" Samarth answered,

> "Those who remained young became great,
> Those who grew up became great rogues "

As one grows up one sprouts horns, one develops self-will Then one never thinks of God ! The hearts of little children are unspoilt, their minds pure We say to a child, "Don't tell lies " He asks, "What is a lie ?" Then we expound to him the doctrine that statement must correspond to fact The boy is puzzled and begins to wonder whether there is another way of speaking than saying what is How can one say what is not ? This is like telling one to call a square a square and not a circle. All this only surprises the child What are children ? Images of purity, of God-head What are children ? Images of purity, of God-head Grown-ups teach them all wrong The truth is, if we cannot see the Lord in mother, father, teacher, sant and child, in what other form can we see Him ? There is no nobler form of God than these Learn first these gentle and familiar forms of the Lord In these the Lord is written in bold, clear letters,

(52) God in Creation—Some Examples

First let us learn to see God in serene and holy human forms In the same way let us see Him first in the sublime and beautiful aspects of nature Look at the dawn, the divine glow that precedes sunrise The *rishis* that sing the glories of this goddess dance with joy Beautiful words spring from their hearts ' Oh Usha ! You are the divine messenger sent to us by the Lord You are bathed in dew drops You are the banner of immortality " The Vedic *rishi* says, 'You bring us the message of the Lord If, even after seeing you, I do not see and understand Him, who else can make Him known to me ?" Clothed in such beauty, Usha rises and dances before us, but we have no eyes for her

Again, look at the Sun To see him is to see God What vivid pictures he paints upon the sky ! For months the painter moves his brush up and down the canvas, trying to paint the sunrise with a splash of colours But rise early in the morning and look at God's art With what can we compare this art divine, this boundless beauty ? But who looks at this ? While out there the Lord stands in all his loveliness, here the fellow draws his blanket closer and snores The sun says, "You lazy creature, you would sleep for ever, but I shan't let you, I shall wake you up " And he sends his living beams through the window—

> "suurya aatmaa jagatah tasthushah cha "
> "The sun is the Self, the ground of all that moves and all that is still " The *rishi* calls him "*mitra*", friend
> "mitro janaan yaatayati bruvaano
> mitro daadhaara prthiviim uta dyaam "
> "This friend calls out to the people and puts them to work He upholds heaven and earth "

In truth the sun is the foundation of life. See the Lord in him

And then the holy Ganga ! When I was living in Kasi I used to go and sit on the banks of the Ganga I would go and sit there in the loneliness of night What beauty, what brightness in its flow ! Those lovely and majestic waters and the countless stars of the sky in them ! I would sit there speechless. What calm of mind was mine when my eyes were

filled with the sight of the Ganga, which descended from the matted locks of Siva, from the Himalayas, the river by whose banks Kings, casting off the bauble of power, perform their penance In the stillness of the peace, I began to understand why the Hindu wishes that after death his bones at least should be thrown into the Ganga You may laugh, but that does not alter the fact To me this *bhavana*, this faith, appears worthy of acceptance and indeed holy During the last moments they pour a few drops of Ganga water into the mouth of the dying man What are these drops, but the Lord Himself entering the body Regard the Ganga as God it is His grace that flows as this water Mother Ganga washes off and carries away in her course all the uncleanness of our mind and body If God is not manifest to us in Mother Ganga, where else shall we see Him ? The sun, the rivers, the mighty ocean tossing up into tumultuous waves, all these are forms of God

And the wind ! Whence it comes and where it goes, we do not know It is the messenger of the Lord In our India a great wind blows from the Himalayas and another from the mighty ocean This purifying mind touches our heart, It awakens us It whispers in our ears But who listens to its message ? If the jailor does not give us a letter with four lines scribbled on it we feel sore You poor wretch, what is there so precious in that letter ? The wind brings to you every moment the loving message of the Lord, listen to it

And the animals that serve us ! Mother Cow—how full of tenderness and attachment she is, how loving ! How eagerly cows come running back up hill and down date to their calves after going grazing all day long The Vedic *rishis*, seeing the gurgling rivers bringing pure water from the mountains, think of the heavy-uddered cows returning lowing to their calves The *rishi* says to the river, "Oh Goddess, you who bring holy, sweet and clean water, you are like the cow bringing milk to her calf As the cow will not stay in the forest, so you cannot stay in the mountains You come running fast to meet your thirsty children "

"vaasraa iva dhenavah syandamaanaah."

In the form of the loving cow, the Lord stands at our door

And then the horse ! How beautiful, how true, how faithful ! How dearly the Arabs love their horses ? Don't you know the story of Arab and his horse ? He was driven by circumstances to sell his horse, and he made up his mind to do so Carrying in his hand a purse full of gold coins, the price of the animal, he enters the stable The moment he sees the noble and loving eyes of the horse, he flings the purse down exclaiming, "Even if I have to die, I will not sell my horse. Come what may Let me perish of hunger if I must God will help me " How his skin tingles when we pat him! And what a lovely man he has ! There is no end to his merits What is there in a bicycle ? Look after a horse well and he will be ready to give up his life for you He will be your friend and stay with you A friend of mine was learning to ride The horse used to throw him off He said, "The horse will not let me keep my seat." I said to him, "Do you only attempt to ride the horse, or do you also feed him and look after him ? When someone else serves him, how can you ride him ? Feed him yourself and give him water, rub him down and then try to ride him " He did so and said to me after a few days. "The horse doesn't throw me off now " The horse is a form of the Lord And would He throw off a servant ? The horse yielded to his devotion The horse wants to know whether you are a devotee or not The Lord Krishana would rub down the horse Himself, and feed him out of his yellow silk garment If there is a puddle or a ditch to cross the bicycle stops, but the horse jumps over This beautiful and loving animal is a form of the Lord

And the Lion ! When I was in Baroda I would get up in the morning listening to its majestic roar The majestic beauty of his voice thrilled my heart The magnificent sound proceeding from his heart was like the sound one hears in the inmost shrine of a temple The noble courage, the fearless beauty of his expression! The regal gait and mien! His flowing mane is the *chamara*, the royal insignia, provided by nature for the King of the forest In a garden in Baroda there was a lion He was not free, he went round and round in a cage But there was not a trace of cruelty in his eyes There was compassion in his expression and his look It looked as though he had no thought for the world and was absorbed in his own mediation. In fact, the lion is a holy

manifestation of the Lord I read, when I was a child, the story of "Androcles and the Lion" What a wonderful story! The famished lion, remembering Androcles' kindness, becomes his friend and licks his feet What does it mean? Androcles had seen in the lion the Lord Himself There is always a lion near the Lord Siva The lion is a creature of divine glory

And is the tiger inferior? The power of the Lord shines through him It is not impossible to make friends with him Bhagavan Panini, seated in the forest, was instructing his pupils Just then a tiger came along The boys got frightened and shouted "Tiger, Tiger!" Panini said calmly, "Well, what does *"vyaaghra"* (tiger) mean? *"Vyaajighartı iti vyaaghrah"* That is a *vyaaghra* whose sense of smell is actute Though the boys were afraid of the animal, to Panini it was a harmless delightful word Seeing the tiger, he began to explain the etymology of the word The tiger ate Panini up But what if it did? The tiger liked the sweet smell of his body, and so tore it and ate it up But Panini did not run away, because he was a worshipper of *sabda-brahman* (God as the Word) For him all things had become one In the tiger too he recognised God as the World Because of this greatness, he is reverently called "Bhagavan Panini" in the commentaries when his name occurs They express their deep gratitude to him for opening with the instrument of knowledge the eyes of the blind world—

"ajnaanaandhasya lokasya jnaanaanjanasalaakayaa
chakshurunmiilitam yena tasmai paaninaye namah"

Thus Bhagavan Panini sees in the tiger the vision of the Lord Jnanadev says—

"Though to our home comes heaven, or upon us springs the tiger,
Never let there be a break in the consciousness of Self"

Such was the state of Maharshi Panini He had realised that the tiger was a divine manifestation

So too, with the serpent People are much afraid of the snake But the snake is, in its stern regard for cleanliness, like a brahmin How clean! How beautiful! I cannot bear dirt You may come across any number of dirty brahmins, but have you ever seen a dirty

snake ? It is like a *rishi* living in solitude Pure, bright and lovely, it shines like a garland, why fear it ? Our ancestors laid down ways of worshipping it You may, if you like, say that Hinduism is full of all sorts of superstitions, but worship of the snake is an integral part of it In my childhood I used to draw with turmeric the figure of a snake for my mother to worship, I would tell my mother, "But there are nice pictures for sale in the shop, mother " She would answer, "That's no good We want none of that Only the figure drawn by my child is good enough " And to it worship would be offered Is this madness ? But think a little In the month of *sravan* (July-August), it comes to us as a guest In the rainy season, the poor creature's house is filled with water What could it do then ? This *rishi*, who lives in some remote and lonely spot, comes and lies down under the gable or between the logs, wishing not to give us trouble It takes up very little room But we run after it with a stick When at his need a guest comes to our house, is this the way to welcome him ? It is said of Saint Francis that, when he saw a snake in the forest, he would welcome it lovingly, saying, "Come, brother, come !" And the snake would play in his lap and crawl up and down his body Don't think this is fiction, Love certainly has such power We speak of the venom of the snake, but have men less of it ? The snake stings now and then, and it is never the first to hurt Nine out of ten snakes are not poisonous They guard your fields They live on the many kinds of vermin that destroy your crop This helpful creature, so clean, so powerful, this lover of solitude is an image of the Lord Snakes are connected in one way or another with all our deities Ganesa wears one round his waist Siva wraps one round his neck And Vishnu sleeps on one as his bed Realise the secret, the charm of it The meaning of it all is that the Lord's from is manifested though the snake Recognise the Lord who dweels the serpent

(53) God in Creation—Some More Examples

How many such examples shall I give ? All I am doing is to use the imagination The whole essence of the *Ramayana* lies in this beautiful power The love of father and son, the love of mother and child, the love of brothers, the love of husband and wife—all this is found in the *Ramayana* But it is not because of these things that the *Ramayana* is dear to me It is dear to me

because Rama made frinds with the monkeys People today say that these monkeys belonged to the Naga tribe It is the job of the historians to research into the thihgs of the past I have nothing against their labours, but if Rama made friends with real monkeys, what is there impossible in that ? The *Ramatva,* the Rama-ness of Rama, his charm, lies precisely here, that he made friends with monkeys

Such too was the relation between Krishna and the cows The ground of Krishna-worship is this imagination Look at any picture of Krishna, you will see him surrounded by cows. Gopalakrishna, Krishna the cowherd ! If we take the cows away from Krishna, what is left of Krishna ? If from Rama we remove the monkeys, how much of Rama is there even in Rama ? Rama saw the Supreme in the monkeys too and became their friend and comrade This is the key to the *Ramayana* Without this key you would miss its beauty The love of father and son, of mother and child you will find elsewhere too, but this union, this sweet friendship between *nara* and *vanara,* between man and monkey, this you will find nowhere else The Lord in the monkey, the *Ramayana* has made its own

At sight of the monkeys, the *rishis* were filled with joy From Ramtek to the banks of the Krishna those monkeys wandered and played, jumping from branch to branch, without once touching the ground When the *rishis,* with their delicate sympathies, saw the dense forests and the monkeys at play, poetry, welled up in their hearts, they were thrilled The *Upanishads,* in describing the eyes of *brahman,* compare them to the eyes of a monkey The monkey's eyes are very restless They look on all sides at once The eyes of *brahman* should be like this too It would not do for the Lord to have His eyes fixed It is all right for you and me to sit in meditation with eyes shut, but if the Lord is lost in meditation, what would happen to the world ? So *rishis* see in monkeys the eyes of the Lord who watches all creatures Learn to see the Lord in monkeys

And then the peacock ! Peacocks are rare in Maharashtra, but they abound in Gujarat When I was in Gujarat, I used to walk some ten miles daily, and saw many peacocks When clouds gather and it is about to rain and the sky darkens, the peacocks begin to call. You will understand it only when

you have once heard for yourself the piercing plaint drawn out from the depths of its heart The structure of our music is built on this note of the peacock, which is our *shadjama svara—"shadjam rauti"* This primary note we got from the peacock Then, from it, we derived the other notes Its face turned upwards to the clouds, its majestic feathers spread out like an umbrella, as it hears the roaring clouds—what is man's finery before this beauty? Kings and emperors too deck themselves elaborately, but how can they compete with the glory of the peacock's tail? Those thousand eyes, that many-coloured brightness, the marvellously soft and lovely texture, the consummate worksmanship! Look at this tail for a while, and see in if the presence of the Lord All creation is decked out in this way. Wherever we turn, the Lord stands there for us to see, but we who do not see Him are wretched Tukaram says —

> "To the Lord, all times and places are auspicious, only the wretched knows scarcity"

To the saints there is prosperity always, but we unfortunate ones are troubled by famine everywhere

The worship of Agni is described in the Vedas Agni is Narayana What a brightly shining form he has! When two sticks are rubbed against each other, he shines forth Where was he hiding before? What heat, what light! The first sounds of the Veda emerged in the worship of Agni—

> "agnimiile purohitam yajnasya devam rtvijam
> hotaaram ratnadhaatamam"

Look at that fire in whose worship the Vedas begin When I see its flames, I am reminded of the excitement and agitation of our human souls Whether it be the domestic or the forest fire, its flames are never steady The man of detachment has no home Wherever those flames are found, they set off excitement They are ever in a state of agitation They yearn to rise high Scientists would say that they flicker because of ether, or because of the pressure of the wind But so far as I am concerned, I see in the fire its eagerness to join the Supreme

Being up there, the ocean of light, *Suryanarayana*, and hence its restless, perpetual upward movement From birth to death without a pause, it leaps, and runs The sun is the whole of which the flames are parts The part yearns to rejoin the whole, it is only with extinction that the excitement ends, not before It never considers how far away from the sun it is All it knows is how to rise above the earth to its utmost capacity Is this mere fire is it not *vairagya*, freedom from attachment, shining as fire ? That is why the first sound of the Veda is "*agnimule* "

And how can one forget the cuckoo ? Whom does it call ? In the summer, when rivers and tanks have gone dry, tender young leaves sprout on the trees ? It seems to ask, "Who gave this beauty to the trees ? Where is the giver of these gifts?" How sweet, how eager is the call ! In the Hindu religion there is a *vrata*, an observance, relating to the cuckoo's voice Women take a vow not to eat any food until they have heard the cuckoo's call This *vrata* teaches us to see the Supreme manifest in the voice of the cuckoo The cuckoo calls so sweetly that it seems to be chanting some *Upanishads* One hears its voice, but does not see it The English poet Wordsworth sings,—

> "O Cuckoo ! shall I call thee Bird,
> Or but a wandering Voice ?
>
> . .
>
> To seek thee did I often rove
> Through woods and on the green,
> And thou wert still a hope, a love,
> Still longed for, never seen "

While the great English poet wanders in search of the cuckoo, the ordinary women in Indian homes eat no food till they see it This *kokila-vrata* confers on Indian women the status of poets In the cuckoo that calls so sweetly bringing such joy, we see the Lord in His beauty

If the cuckoo is beautiful, is the crow ugly ? No, the crow too is worthy of respect To me it is very dear, with its deep black colour, and its deep strong voice Do you think its voice raucous ? I don't, its voice too is sweet As it comes near, beating its wings, how lovely it looks ? Does it not capture the hearts of little children ? The little child refuses to take food,

cooped up in the house One has to take him out into the open yard and show him crows and sparrows before he can be persuaded to eat Is the child mad that he so loves the crow ? Far from it, he is full of wisdom At once the child becomes one with the Lord in the form of the crow The mother may pour curds or milk on the rice, or cover it with sugar—nothing pleases the child His pleasure is in the crow that flaps its wings and cocks its head

All the fables of Aesop are based on the child's lively interest in the objects of creation Aesop saw the Lord everywhere Among the books I love I should give first place to Aesop's Fables, I shall never forget it Aesop's kingdom is not peopled only with human beings with two hands and two feet In it, foxes, dogs, crows, deer, hares, tortores, snakes, worms, all talk and laugh It is a huge conference The whole of creation speaks to Aesop He had the divine vision The *Ramayana* too is based on this truth on this vision Tulsidas describes the *lila* of Rama as a child Rama is playing in the courtyard A crow comes near and Rama approaches it slowly to catch it The crow jumps back At last Rama gets tired But then an idea comes to him He takes a sweet in his hand and draws nearer to it As the stretches out his hand further, the crow comes closer Tulsidas gives a page to this description, because the crow is the Lord The same divinity is present in the crow as well as in Rama The coming together of Rama and the crow is the union of the Supreme with the Supreme

(50) In Villains too

The truth of the matter is that God is present in all the forms of creation As holy rivers, mighty mountains, the majestic ocean, the tender-hearted cow, the noble steed, the magnificent lion, the sweet-voiced cuckoo, the beautiful peacock, the pure hermit snake, the crow flapaing its wings, the restless flame, the still star,—as all this He is present We should train our eyes to see Him We should first learn the big letters and then the small ones, we should first learn the easy letters and then the complex ones Until we master the complex letters, there is no progress in learning to read At every step, in word after word, the complex letters occur We should learn to see the Lord who dwells in evil persons We understand Rama, but we should learn to understand Ravana too

We understand Prahlada, but we should learn to understand Hiranyakasipu too The *Vedas* say,—

"namonamah stenaanaam pataye namonamah
namah punjishthebhyo namo nishaadebhyah
brahma daashaa brahma daasaa brahmaiva ime kitavaah "

"Salutations to the prince of robbers ! Salutations to the cruel ones, to the doers of harm ! The thugs, the thieves, the robbers, all the *brahman* Salutations to them all !"

What does this mean ? It means that, now that we have mastered the easy letters, we can proceed to the difficult ones Carlyle has written a book on "Hero Worship" There he describes Napoleon as a hero, as a manifestation of God What is found there is not the pure Supreme, but a mixture—but even this should be understood So in Tulsidas, Ravana is called Rama's enemy-*bhakta* Yes, the nature and conduct of this *bhakta* is rather peculiar By contact with fire, the foot swells up in blisters, but the swelling subsides when a hat fomentation is applied It is one and the same fire, but it manifests itself differently in different circumstances Though manifested differently in Rama and in Ravana, it is the same Supreme that is present in both

Gross and subtle, pure and mixed, simple and complex—learn all this and realise in the end that there is no place where the Lord is not In every atom He alone is present From the ant to the universe, He spreads The Lord who cares equally for all, the compassionate one who is all knowledge, tenderness skill, holiness and beauty—He stands on all sides everywhere

XI

THE VISION OF THE COSMIC FORM

(55) Arjuna's Eagerness to See It

Brothers, we learned last week how to recognise the Supreme who pervades the countless objects to the Universe, and how to make this vast spectacle our own How to see God first in the gross then in the subtle, first in the simple then in the complex and thus to see Him in all things, how to realise Him, how through practice day and night, to come to feel that the whole world is

oneself—all this we saw in the last Section

Now we turn to the Eleventh Section In this Chapter the Lord reveals His visible form, and so His grace Arjuna said, "Lord, I wish to behold with these eyes your complete form, the form in which is manifest all the power of your glory " What Arjuna prayed for was *visvarupa-darsana*, the vision of the cosmic form

We use words like *visva* and *jagat*, the universe and the world This world is a small part of the universe And even this small part we are unable to understand If we think of the whole universe, this world which seemed so vast now seems tiny If we look up at the night sky we see innumerable orbs Do we know the real nature of those festoons of light hung up in the heavens, those lovely little flowers, those millions of twinkling stars ? Each of those little stars is immensely big Each is big enough to contain countless suns They are shinning spheres of elements burning. Who can count them ? They are beyond measure or limit Even the naked eye sees thousands of them When we look through a telescope millions become visible With more powerful telescopes many more can be seen and it will be difficult to say where or how it will all end Of this infinite creation spreading above, below and on all sides of us, a tiny bit is what we call our world And how huge even this world appears to us !

This vast creation is but one aspect of the Lord's form Now let us look at another aspect of it, that is, Time If we consider the part, our knowledge of history goes back at most to ten thousand years Of the time before that, we know nothing While historical time is of the order of ten thousand years, our individual life's length is not even a hundred years Time stretches without beginning or end It is impossible to measure or count the time that is past It is equally impossible to conceive the time that is to come Just as our world is so tiny as against the vastness of space, our 10,000 years of history is as nothing in the infinity of Time, the past is without a beginning and the future without an end And as for this brief present, even as we are speaking, it slips into the past Even as we try to describe where the present is, it has become the past This is elusive present is all that belongs to us I am speaking now, but as the words come out of my mouth they have already joined the past Thus, this

but the nourishment is the same in the sea of nectar and in a drop of it If we but drink one drop of it, we gain the fullness of *amrtatva*, immortality

In the same way, the same beauty and holiness that there is in the cosmic form of the Lord is also present in the little image If I am not able to recognise wheat when I am shown a handful of it, of what use is it to put before me a sackful ! If I do not recognise Him in the little models before me, how can I recognise Him in all His vastness ? Does size make and difference ? To understand the small form is to understand the big Hence I feel no desire that the Lord should show to me His cosmic form Nor have I, like Arjuna the right to ask for it Moreover, it is not as if what is seen by me is only a part of the cosmic form If someone brought a part torn off from a picture, we cannot imagine from it the whole picture But the Lord is not made up of parts in this way, one part of Him cannot be cut off from the rest Even in a little image, the whole of that infinite Supreme is contained What is the difference between a small photograph and a big one Everything that is found in the big one is found in the small too The small one is not a portion, a fragment, of the big A letter means the same whether it is written big or it is written small

This is the meaning behind image-worship Many people have opposed image-worship Foreigners, and even thinkers of our own country, have found fault with it But the more I think of it, the more I realise its beauty What is the meaning of it ? Image-worship is the *vidya*, the art, of experiencing the whole universe in a little object Is it wrong to learn the *vidya* which helps us to see the whole world in a little village ? This is not mere imagination, it is a matter of direct experience What there is in the cosmic form, all of it is contained in a little image, in a grain of sand In that lump of clay is everything—the mango the banana, wheat gold, copper and silver All the world is in that grain of sand Just as an actor in a small troupe appears again and again on the stage taking different roles, the Lord appears in the universe Like a playwright who writes his own play and himself takes all the parts in it, the Lord produces a play without end, and Himself acts the parts of countless characters on His stage If we understand one character in this infinite drama, we shall understand them all

The basis of image-worship is the same as that of metaphors and similes in poetry When we see a circle or a sphere we are filled with joy, for there is an order, a shapeliness in it This shapeliness is a divine quality The Lord's creation is beautiful in all its parts and relations There is perfect harmony in it. The sphere is an image of the shapeliness of the Lord But even so is the twisted tree in the undergrowth of the forest. There is in it the freedom of the Lord This tree knows no bondage Who bind the Lord ? The Lord who is beyond all bonds is in that contorted, unshapely tree A tall straight column reminds us of the Lord In the highly wrought ornamented pillar we see the Lord who has painted the sky with stars In a well-trimmed garden we see the restraint of the Lord, and in the primeval forest we see His grandeur and freedom In both we find joy Are we then mad ? No, there is joy in both, because there is in each a quality of the Lord The power in the smooth *salagram* is also in the rough *linga* taken from the Narmada. Hence, if I do not see the form of the Lord in all its majesty, it does not matter

It is because the Lord is present in every object through a distinct quality, that we find joy in it, we feel at one with it This joy is not without a cause Why do we feel joy ? We are somehow related to it, and hence the joy The mother's heart dances at the sight of her child, because she knows the kinship. In the same way, link every object to the Lord The Lord in me is also in the object To strengthen this kinship is to increase joy. There is no other means for joy Begin to establish the link of love everywhere, and then watch the miracles happen You will see then in every grain and every drop the Lord who pervades the boundless universe When we have power to see this what else do we need ? For this, however, it is essential to discipline and train the senses When the desire for enjoyment goes and the holy outlook of love is gained, then we shall see God alone in all objects This idea is described beautifully in the *Upanishads* What is the colour of the *atman* ? What can we say is the colour of the *atman* ? The *rishi* says, with love,

"yathaa ayam indragopah "

The *atman* is like this scarlet silk-soft insect, the *indragopa*.

When one looks at the *indragopa*, what joy there is ! What is the source of this joy ? That which exists in me, exists in the *indragopa* too If there is no kinship between us, how could there be joy ? The beautiful *atman* within me is within the *indragopa* too Hence the comparison Why do we use simils ? Why do we find joy in them ? We use similes because things are alike, and he find joy in the likeness If the things compared have nothing in common, where is the joy in it ? If someone says that salt is like pepper, we should think him mad But if someone says that the stars are like flowers, we see the likeners and enjoy it When we say, "Salt is like pepper," we do not experience the likeness, but to one whose vision his become wide enough to see the same Lord in the salt and in the pepper, the question "What is salt like ?" and the answer, "It is like pepper," will bring an experience of joy The wary and the woof of all the objects in the world is the Lord's form In every object in world the warp and the woof are alike the Lord's form, to see it, where is the need for the vision of the cosmic form ?

(57) Not for Us the Cosmic Form

Even if we see the cosmic form, can we bear it ? For a beautiful little image of the Lord I feel a sweetness of lover, a sense of belonging, that I can never experience on seeing the cosmic form Arjuna's state was not far different He trembles and pleads at last, "Lord, let me see your dear familiar form again " Arjuna seems to tell us from his own experience, "Do not desire to see the cosmic form of the Lord " It is best that the Lord is seen pervading all the worlds, and all time, past, present and to come If that distant star should draw itself up into a ball of fire and come down and stand in front of me, what would happen to me ? How peaceful those stars appear ! They seem to speak to me from the far distance But if the star, that calms the eye from afar, came near ? It is a burning ball I would be reduced to ashes Let all things be where they are and as they are in this boundless vast creation of the Lord What joy can there be in huddling them all up into a single room ? Those thousands of doves in the aviary in Bombay, what freedom do they have ? It is a depressing sight The pleasure is in this, that creation is divided into here, above and below And the same is true of Time We do

not remember the past and of the future we know nothing—and this is only for our good In the Holy Quran are mentioned five things where God has sole power and man is helpless One of them is knowledge of the future We are free to guess, but guessing is not knowledge This ignorance concerning the future is indeed our good fortune Likewise, our forgetfulness of the past is truly good If a bad man becomes a good one, I do not respect him when I remember the past No matter what he says, I am unable to forget his old sins It is only when he dies and is reborn in another form that the world can forget his sins Memories of the past increase our evil dispositions When all past experience is forgotten, everything is over There must be some way of forgetting the sins and virtues of the past That way is death When we cannot endure the sufferings of this birth, why rake up the muck-heaps of past *janmas* ? Is there not enough rubbish in the little room of this one life ? Even our childhood we tend to forget And it is good to forget it To achieve Hindu-Muslim unity the only means is to forgot the past Aurangazeb may have been a tyrant, but how long will you repeat it ? There is a Gujerati folk-song by Ratan Bai which one hears very often Its concluding lines say, "The fame of men alone survives on earth, their sins are forgotten" Time is like a sieve We should take only the good things of history and cast off the evil If men would forget the evil and remember only good, how wonderful it would be ! But this does not happen Forgetfulness is necessary, and that is why the Lord has given us death

In truth, the world, as it is, is auspicious Where is the need to gather up into a little spot this world of Time and Space ? Familiarity breeds contempt We should be intimate with some things and keep others at a distance Before our teacher we sit humbly, at a distance But with our mother, we go and sit in her lap There is an appropriate way of dealing with the various images of reality While we draw close to a flower, we step back from the fire The beauty of the stars is in their distance This is so with all creation It is not as if we shall increase our joy by bringing very near to us that which is very far away Real pleasure lies in letting things be wherever they are We cannot say that something that gives delight from afar will always confer greater comfort when brought near We should leave it, out there, and enjoy it from afar. There is no meaning in an enforced familarity

There is no saying that there is joy or good in knowing the past and the future Arjuna, over-mastered by love, importunately demanded, and the Lord yielded, and revealed to him the vision of His cosmic form But, for me, the little image of the Lord will suffice This little image is not a fragment of the Supreme And even if it were, even if I saw only a foot or the toe of a foot of His boundless body, I would say, "How blessed I am ! How great is my good fortune !" I have learnt this from experience When Shri Jamnalal Bajaj threw open to the Harijans the Lakshminarayan temple in Wardha, I too went there for *darshan* For some fifteen or twenty minutes I stood gazing at the image It was as if I was in *samadhi* As I looked at the face, the chest, the hands and then the feet, my eyes were rooted in the feet All that remained with me was the feeling, "Sweet indeed is the worship of Your Feet " If the great Lord cannot be contained within a little image, is it not enough that we behold His Feet ? Arjuna pleaded with the Lord, he could claim much from Him How intimate was his friendship, how great his love and affection ! What claims have I ? A sight of the Feet is enough for me That is more than I deserve

(58) The Quintessence

On this description of the Lord's divine form, I do not wish to dwell with my mind, to approach it with the mind would be sin Let us read again and again the holy verses describing the cosmic form and become pure I do not like to employ the mind to cut up the Lord's form It would be like the *aghora* form of worship Those who follow this path go to the cremation ground and, tearing off corpses, perform *tantra* worship The divine form of the Lord—

> "visvataschakshuruta visvatomukho
> visvato baahuruta visvataspaat—"

it is widespread, infinite Let us recite the verses describing it, cleanse the mind of sin and make it holy

In this description of the Lord there is only one point at which the mind begins to think The Lord tells Arjuna, "Arjuna, all these are mortal, make yourself an occasion, an instrument—I am the real doer of all action," These words keep ringing in one's

heart When the thought arises in the mind that one should make oneself an instrument in the Lord's hand, then the mind begins to reflect How does one make oneself an instrument in God's hand How does one become a flute in Krishna's hand's What would it be like if He put me to his lips and drew sweet notes through me? To be a flute means to become hollow But I am stuffed full with passions and desires How then can music come through me? My tone is gruff I am gross I am filled with *aham-kara,* the sense of 'I' I must empty myself of ago Only when I become fully free, altogether empty, will the Lord breathe through me But to become a flute at the lips of the Lord is a deed of very great daring If I wish to become the sandals beneath His feet, even that would not be easy The sandals of the Lord should be so soft that they will cause no pain to His feet I should place myself between His feet and the thorns and stones I should cure and refine myself continually, and grow softer and softer And so it is not easy to become even the sandals of the Lord If I am to be wielded as a sword by the Lord, I must not be a massive lump of iron I should whet myself on the grindstone of *tapas,* penance, and acquire a keen and tempered edge My life should shine like a sword in the hands of the Lord These thoughts arise in my mind I am lost in the wish to become an instrument How this can come to be, the Lord Himself tells us in the last *sloka* to this Section Sankaracharya in his commentary calls this *sloka, sarvartha sara,* the quintessence of the *Gita* It runs—

"matkarmakrt matparamo madbhaktah sangavarjitah
nirvairassarvabhuteshu yah sa maameti paandava"

"He, who bears enmity towards none, he who stands impartial and is free from attachment and serves me selflessly, he who dedicates to me all that he does, he who is filled with devotion to me, all-enduring, free of passion and desire, full of love, such a devotee becomes an instrument in the hand of the Lord" This is the essence of the *Gita's* teaching

XII

BHAKTI—SAGUNA AND NIRGUNA

(59) From One-pointedness to Universality—Sections 6 to 11

The waters of the Ganga are everywhere holy and cleansing,

but at Haridwar, Kasi and Prayag, they have a special purity They have made the whole world holy The *Gita* too is sacred from beginning to end But some of the intermediate Sections have become holy places One such place is the Twelfth Section The Lord Himself calls this "the stream of nector"—"*ye tu dharmyaamrtam idam yathoktam paryupaasate* " This is a small Section with only twenty *slokas*, nevertheless it is a stream of nectar It is sweet like nectar and confers a new and immortal life In this Section, the Lord has Himself sung the essence of the glory of devotion, *bhakti*

In reality, from the Sixth Section onwards, the philosophy of *bhakti* has been expounded The exposition of the science of life occupied us in the first five Sections The *karma* which consists in the performance of *svadharma*, the *vikarma* the accompanying inner process which helps *karma*, and the final state of *akarma* resulting from the practice of both, which turns to ashes all *karma* —theese ideas were expounded in the first five Sections With this, the science of life is complete Then, from the Sixth Section to the end of the Eleventh Section, a kind of enquiry into the philosophy of *bhakti* engaged us It began with *ekagrata*, one-pointedness The Sixth Section describes how to make the mind one-pointed, the means to this end, and the need for it The Eleventh Section describes *samagrata*, choiceless universal awareness We should now see how we made the long journey from *ekagrata* to *samagrata*

We began with one-pointedness of mind Once concentration has been attained, one can pursue any subject To mention a subject which I like, we can apply the concentrated mind to the study of mathematics Assuredly, we gain much by this But this is not the highest good we can get from concentration of mind. We cannot judge the full value of concentration by the study of mathematics Through concentration we may achieve high success in mathematics and other branches of knowledge, but this is no true test of its value Therefore the Seventh Section tells us that it is towards the feet of the Lord that our vision must be turned The Eighth Section says that we should unceasingly concentrate on the feet of the Lord—that we should try till the moment of death to keep our eyes and ears, our speach, absorbed in them. All our senses should be thus trained "The senses are now at home here, except through this awareness, they see nothing " All

the senses should be filled with the Lord Whether those around us are lamenting loudly or praising the Lord, whether they are weaving webs of *vasanas*, or are saints free from desire, whether it is night or day, the practice of constancy throughout life in order that at the moment of death the Lord may stand infront of us—this is taught in the Eighth Section In the Sixth Section, *ekagrata* one-pointedness, in the Seventh Section, *ekagrata* towards the Lord, which is *prapatti* or surrender, in the Eighth Section, *satatya* or constancy, and in the Ninth Section, *samarpana* or perfect dedication and service—these are described In the Tenth Section, the order of progression, the successive stages are described—how to proceed step by step, how to receive the image of the Lord in one's heart, how gradually to realise the Supreme Being who prevades all things form the little ant to Brahmadeva. The Eleventh Section describes *samagrata*, cosmic awareness It is the vision of the cosmic form that I call *samagrata-yoga* The vision of the cosmic form is to experience all creation in a grain of sand This is the *virat darsan* Thus, between the Sixth and the Eleventh Sections, *bhakti rasa* is passed again and again through various filters

(60) The Saguna Devotee and the Nirguna Devotee—Both Children of the same Mother

Now, in the Twelfth Section we come to the end of the treatment of the philosophy of *bhakti* Arjuna questions the Lord here about the perfect state, as once before in the Fifth Section he questioned Him at the end of the discussion about the philosophy of life Arjuna asks, "Lord, some worship you as *saguna*, witn form others as *nirguna*, without form Tell me which of the two pleases you more "

What answer could the Lord give ? This is like asking a mother to choose between her two sons One of the two is a little child, who clings to his mother, who is filled with joy at sight of his mother, and cries when he is parted from her even for a moment Without her the world seems empty to him This is the younger son The other son is older. He too loves his mother dearly, but he has grown up and has reached the age of discretion. He can bear to stay away from his mother Even if he has to stay away from her for five or six months, he would not mind it.

He serves his mother, taking full responsibility on himself Because he is busy with his work, he is able to endure separation from her He is respected by the world, and his mother is happy listening to people speaking highly of him That is the elder son If the mother is asked, "You can keep only one of these two sons Which of them would you have ?" what answer could she give? Which son would she choose ? Could she weigh them in a balance ? Considering the mother's situation, what would be her natural answer ? In her helplessness, she would say, "If I must give up one of them, I shall reconcile myself to parting from the elder son " She holds the little child closer to herself, she cannot let him go Drawn by the younger child, she might say something like, "It would not matter so much if the elder son goes " But this is no real answer to the question, which of the sons she loves more She says it because she has to say something But it would not be right to dig into the meaning of her words

The Lord had to face the same difficulty as this mother, when Arjuna questioned Him Arjuna asked, "Lord, you have two kinds of *bhaktas* One of them loves you dearly and always thinks of you His eyes yearn to see you, his ears to hear your praise, his hands and feel to serve you The other, more self-reliant, self-controlled, concerned for the welfare of all creatures, is so absorbed, day and night, in the disinterested service of society, that he seems not to think of you at all He is a *bhakta* filled with a sense of oneness Tell me which of them is dearer to you " Like the mother in the story, Krishna too says, "The *saguna bhakta* is dear to me But the other *bhakta*, the *advaiti*, is also dear to me " The Lord too is in a dilemma—he gives some sort of an answer

And as a matter of fact, the two *bhaktas* are very much alike every way Their claims are equal To judge between them is to attempt something improper and impossible As Arjuna questioned the Lord about *karma* in the Fifth Section, so he questions Him about *bhakti* here In the Fifth Section, it is said that, with the help of *karma* and *vikarma*, man attains the state of *akarma* This state of *akarma* appears in two forms—while in one, a man acts day and night and yet does nothing, in the other, though he seems to do nothing all the twenty-four hours of the day, he turns the whole world upside down *Akarma* appears in these two forms. How to compare them ? One can compare a segment of

a circle with that of another But how can we compare two segments of the same circle ? Both have the same shape and properties—they have the same form But in describing the basis of *akarm*, the Lord calls the one *sannyasa* and the other *karma-yoga* In the end, the choice is left to be decided according to which is easier and more accessible

The problem of *saguna* and *nirguna* is similar The *saguna* devotee serves the Lord through the *indriyas*, the organs of perception and action, the *nirguna* devotee thinks constantly of the good of all the world The first appears absorbed in outward service, but he meditates constantly within The other seems to do no direct service, but within him a great service is going on Which of these two *bhaktas* is superior ? The one who works day and night and yet does not act, he is the *saguna* devotee The *nirguna* devotee is one who is concerned within for the good of all, is thinking constantly of them. Though differing outwardly, the two are of the same nature within, and both are dear to the Lord But, of the two, *saguna bhakti* is much the easier Here again the Lord gives the same answer that He gave in the Fifth Section

(61) Saguna is Easy and Safe

In the *yoga* of *saguna bhakti*, we directly employ the *indriyas* The *indriyas* can be either a help or a hindrance or both Whether they save or destroy depends on the way we look at them Suppose that a man's mother is at the point of death, and wishes to see him; but there is a distance of fifteen miles between them It is wild uneven country, with only a footpath In this situation, is the footpath a help or a hindrance ? He might say, "What a wretched track ! But for this, I would be by my mother's side this moment !" To such a man, the path appears an enemy But he manages somehow to walk the distance, all the time cursing the path But, whatever the difficulties of the path, he has to keep going and hurry forward If he looks on the path as his enemy and sits down in despair, the victory will go to his enemy, the path But by running fast, he achieves victory

Another man in the same plight may say, "In this wilderness, thank God there is at least this narrow path This will help me to reach my ailing mother If even this were not available, how could I hope to cross the hills and jungles ?" With gratitude he accepts the footpath as a ready means. He regards it with

affection, as a friend, not an enemy Whether you regard it as a friend or an enemy, as a help or a hindrance, you have to walk swiftly along the path Whether the path is an aid or an obstacle—this depends on the outlook of the man who treads it This supplies to the *indriyas* also Whether they are a help or a hindrance depends on the way you look at it

For the *saguna* worshipper, the *indriyas* are an aid They are like flowers to be offered up to the Lord With his eyes, he beholds His form, with his ears, he listens to His story, with his mouth, he utters His holy name, on his feet he performs pilgrimages, and with his hands, renders service In this way he dedicates all his *indriyas* to the Lord They are not there for enjoyment The flowers are there to be offered to the Lord, not to be worn round one's neck Thus, he uses all his senses in the service of the Lord This is the way of the *saguna* worshipper

But to the *nirguna* worshipper, the senses seem to be an obstruction He keeps them under control, he locks them up in a room He starves them and stands guard over them The *saguna* worshipper feels no need for such care He has surrendered his *indriyas* at the feet of the Lord Both these are methods of controlling the *indriyas*, two ways of restraining them But whichever method we adopt, we must keep the *indriyas* under control The aim of both the methods is the same—to prevent them from wallowing in the pleasures of the senses One method is easy, the other difficult

The *nirguna* worshipper is devoted to the welfare of all beings This is no ordinary matter ' To work for the good of all the world" is a thing easy to say, but difficult to practise One devoted to the good of the world can think of nothing else That is why *nirguna* worship is difficult *Saguna* worship, however, can be rendered in many ways, according to one's powers and opportunities. To serve the little village we were born in, to look after one's parents this is *saguna* worship All we have to make sure is that we do not work against the welfare of the world No matter how insignificant your service is, so long as it causes no harm to others, it will ascend the scale of *bhakti*, otherwise, it would become a form of attachment Whether it is our parents or our friends, our suffering kinsfolk or great saints, that we serve, we should regard them as the Lord Imagine that in every one of them you see an image of the Lord and rest satisfied This *saguna*

worship is easy, but *nirguna* worship is hard The meaning and substance of the two are the same But *saguna* is easier, and, therefore, better That is all

Apart from ease, there is another advantage in *saguna* worship There is danger in *nirguna* worship *Nirguna* is all *jnana*, knowledge But *saguna* is full of love, of *bhavana*, of feeling There is the moisture of the heart in it and perfect safety for the *bhakta* In *nirguna*, however, there is some danger There was a time when I relied on *jnana*, but now experience has taught me that mere *jnana* is not enough It is true that *jnana* reduces to ashes the grosser imperfections of the heart, but the impurities, it cannot destroy Self-reliance, reason, discrimination, discipline, detachment—even if you employ all these, the subtle impurities cannot be removed Only the waters of *bhakti* have the power to cleanse them If you like, you can call this "*para-avalambana*," dependence on *para*, but this *para* does not mean 'another," but "the Supreme " Except with the help of the Lord, we cannot get rid of our impurities

Some may say that we are here giving a narrow meaning to the word '*jnana*," that if *jnana* cannot cleanse the mina, its value is reduced I accept this objection, but what I say is that as long as we are in this physical body, our knowledge, however pure it is, will have some impurity, some distortion, some imperfection—its power will be limited When pure *jnana* rises, I have not the slightest doubt that it will destroy every impurity, along with the mind But in this troubled and passionate flesh its power is reduced, and it cannot remove the subtler impurities This is why *bhakti* is necessary Hence, I say that in *bhakti* man is better protected *Saguna bhakti* is easy It relies on the Supreme, while *nirguna bhakti* trusts to oneself But what is the self that one trusts ? It is reliance on the Supreme that dwells within oneself There is no man who attained purity with the help to the mind alone Through self-reliance, that is, through realisation of the Self within, pure knowledge is attained In other words even in the self-reliance of *nirguna bhakti*, the ground is the *atman*, the self

(62) Without Nirguna, Saguna too has Defects

Just as I said that *saguna* worship is easy and safe, I can point to similar advantages in *nirguna bhakti* too In *nirguna*,

there is a discipline, a restraint For example, we start institutions for various kinds of service Each of these is built round an individual, he is its main support In the beginning the institution, rests on a personality But as it grows, it should derive its strength not from an individual but from a principle If such fidelity to a principle does not develop in it, the moment the founder and inspirer dies it is filled with darkness and falls into ruin Let me give an illustration I am fond of When the belt of the *charkha* snaps, not only are we prevented from spinning any more but we cannot transfer the spun yarn to the spindle This is what happens to the institution When the man dies—it is orphaned But this does not happen when fidelity to a person has been replaced by fidelity to a principle *Saguna*, the personal, needs the help of *nirguna*, the impersonal Now and again, we should learn to get out of the personal, the visible The Ganga sprang from the Himalayas, the matted locks of Siva, but she did not stop there It was only when she emerged from them, and crossing mountains, valleys and forests, began to flow on the plains, making music, that she was useful to people In the same way, an institution should be ready to stand on the pillars of principle even ofter the personality behind it is removed When a builder puts up an arch, he supports it from below, but once the arch is set, the support is removed It is only when it stands without the support that we say that the support has done its work It is true that the river of inspiration rises in *saguna*, but it should reach perfection in fidelity to principle, it should flow into *nirgnna* From the womb of *bhakti*, *jnana* should be born From the creeper of *bhakti*, the flower of *jnana* should blossom

The Lord Buddha knew this Hence he prescribed the three dedications Though at first the attachment is to a person, there should develop from it attachment to principle, if this is not possible at the once, there should be, at least, attachment to the institution, in between The loyalty which once was paid to an individual, must now spread to ten or fifteen When there is no loyalty to a *sangha* or an institution, the members would start quarrelling among themselves First dedication to an individual, then dedication to an institution, and finally, dedication to ths principle That is why the Buddhists take three vows of dedication—

"buddham saranam gachhaami
sangham saranam gachhaami
dhammam saranam gachhaami"

First, loyalty to the person, then to the *sangha*, but neither of these is strong enough Only when loyalty to principles is established, the institution begins to produce results The steam of inspiration may begin in *saguna*, but should meet and merge in the sea of *nirguna* Without *nirguna*, *saguna* is imperfect *Nirguna* keeps *saguna* from over-flowing its proper bounds—hence *saguna* owes much to it

In Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, and all other religions, there is image-worship in one from or another Though not the highest form of worship, it is considered worthy of respect, and something valuable in itself Image-worship is free from defect only so long as it remains within the bounds of *nirguna* Once it crosses these bounds, defects appear in *saguna* Any religion which blurs the line between *saguna* and *nirguna* declines and falls In the ancient *yagas*, animal sacrifices were offered Even now, worshippers of *Sakti* sacrifice living animals to her This is the excess of image-worship Here it has crossed its proper bounds, and has taken a wrong turn But there is the restraint of loyalty to principle, there is no such danger

(63) The two are Complementary—Example from the Ramayana

Saguna is not only easy but free from danger, but it needs *nirguna* to complete it As *saguna* grows, the flower of *nirguna*, of devotation to principle, should blossom *Nirguna* and *saguna* complement each other, they are not incompatible Starting from *saguna*, one has to tread the path to the goal of *nirguua* *nirguna*, too, needs the needs the waters of *saguna* to cleanse the subtle impurities of the mind Each gains lustre from the other Both these kinds of *bhakti* are nobly illustrated throughout the *Ramayana*, especially in the *Ayodhya Kanda* Bharata illustrates the *nirguna* form of *bhakti*, and Lakshmana, the *saguna* form

When Rama set out for the forest, he did not intend to take Lakshman with him Rama did not think it was at all necessary He tried to console him, saying, "Lakshmana, I am going to the forest at the bidding of our father You should stay at home By coming with me, you would only add to the suffering of our

parents Serve our parents and our people If you stay with them, I shall be free from care Stay here in my place, and do my duty for me In going to the forest, I am facing no danger I am only visiting *asramas* of *rishi* " With one world, Lakshmana makes a clean sweep of all Rama's arguments Tulsidas pictures this incident vividly Lakshmana's answer is, ' You have shown me the noblest path ! It is also true that I ought to adopt it But then, I shall not be able to bear the burden of ruling the state I have not the strength to act in your place I am only a child "

"diinhi mohi sikh niiki gosoa(n)yi
laagi agam apnii kadaraaii
narvar dhiir dharam-dhur-dhaari
nigam-niitike te adhikaari
mai(n) sisu prabhu -saneh-pratipaalaa
mandaru meru ki lehi(n) maraalaa "

Lakshmana says, "How can the swan sustain the weight of Mount Meru ? Till this momet, Rama, I have grown up nourished by your love All this statesmanship, you can preach to someone else I am only a child," and so puts a stop to the discussion

Just as fish cannot live without water, Lakshmana could not live without Rama He had not the strength for it, With all his being, he lived in and for Rama When Rama slept, he found joy in keeping awake and serving him When the eye is threatened, the hand rushes up to protect it, and takes the blow upon itself, in this way, Lakshmana had become the hand of Rama If there was a blow aimed at Rama, Lakshmana received it first Tulsidas illustrates this by a beautiful simile The flag flies high and is greeted with songs of honour and praise Its colours and from are the subject of song and story But who looks at the staff that stands, straight and holds it ? Like the staff that sustains the flag Lakshmana upholds Rama's fame He stands straight and never bows or bends The fame is Rama's, and it fills the eyes of the world, but who observes the staff ? The dome is conspicuous, but the foundation catches no eye Rama's glory fills the world, but few think of Lakshmana For fourteen years, this staff stood straight and strong, did not bend He stayed in the background and spread Rama's greatness Rama used Lakshmana to achieved some of his most difficult deeds In the end, he entrusted to

Lakshmana even the task of taking Sita and leaving her in the forest Poor Lakshmana did this too Lakshmana was left with no separate existence of his own He had become Rama's eyes, Rama's hands and feet Rama's mind As the river becomes one with the sea, Lakshmana's service had become one with Rama He had become Rama's shadow This devotion of Lakshmana was *saguna bhakti*

But Bharata practises *nirguna bhakti* And this too Tulsidas has pictured beautifully When Rama left for the forest, Bharata was not in Ayodhya When Bharata returned home, Dasaratha had already died Vasishtha, the *guru*, advised Bharata to assume the rule of the State But Bharata answered, "I must see Rama" He was anxious to see Rama, at the same time, he also made arrangements for looking after the kingdom His *bhavana* was, "The kingdom is Rama's To arrange for its administration is to do Rama's work The property belongs to the owner, to manage it alone is my duty" Bharata could not feel as free as Lakshmana This is Bharata's position Devotion to Rama means carrying out the work of Rama, else what good is devotion ? After making all arrangements for the care of the state, he goes to the forest to meet Rama He says to Rama, "Dear brother, this is your kingdom It is for you " but before he could complete the sentence, Rama intervenes, "No Bharata, please look after the kingdom yourself" Bharata stands still, shrinking from a refusal He says, "I shall faithfully obey your command" Whatever Rama says, he has to accept All that was his, he had already surrendered to Rama He went back and performed the duties of the state But he did this, not from Ayodhya, but from a place two miles away, where he lived and did penance As an ascetic he ruled the kingdom When Rama and Bharata met again it was difficult to make out which of them was the ascetic who had performed penance in the forest The two faces are alike they are of the same age, they bear the same marks of *tapasaya* on their faces—it is impossible to say which is Rama and which is Bharata If someone could paint this situation, how noble it would be ! Though Bharata was physically far away from Rama, in spirit, they were not separated even for an instant Though he attended to the affairs of the kingdom, his heart was all the time with Rama *Nirguna bhakti* is filled to the brim with *saguna* How then could there be ony thought of separation from Rama ? Bharata

never felt any sense of separation from Rama He was doing the work of his lord

They young people of today say, "We don't understand all this about Rama-*nama*, Rama-*bhakti*, and Rama-worship. But we shall do God's work " How God's work is to be done, Bharata has shown us by his example By doing God's work, he assimilated and transformed the separation from Rama To keep doing God's work and so to have no time even to feel the sense of separation from Him, is one thing, but, it is quite a different thing when one has no dealings with God at all To live a life of self-control, doing the work of the Lord, is rare indeed Though Bharata's way of life is to work in the spirit of *nirguna*, it never loses contact with its *saguna* basis "Rama, my lord," he says, "I shall humbly do your bidding Whatever you say, I shall not doubt or question " But then, as he prepares to leave, he turns again to Rama, and says, Lord, but my heart is yet unreconciled I feel as if I've lost something " Rama at once understood his yearning and said, "Here, take these sandals " In the end, the respect for *saguna* remains In the end, *saguna* has moistened *nirguna* with the heart's affections Lakshmana would not have been content with Rama's sandals In his view, it would have been like drinking buttermilk when one thirsts for milk Bharata's stand-point is different Though outwardly he stayed far away and worked, his heart was full of Rama Though Bharata thought that devotion to Rama consisted in doing his duty, he still felt the need for the sandals Without them, he could not bear the burden of kingship He did his duty, deriving his authority from the sandals As Lakshmana was *bhakta* of Rama, so too was Bharata But in appearance they differ Though Bharata was firm in his loyalty to duty and principle, he too needed the living warmth of the symbol

(64) An Example from the Story of Krishna

The sap of *Hari-bhakti*, devotion to the Lord, is essential, Hence the Lord tells Arjuna again and again,"*mayyaasaktamanaah paartha*,"—"Arjuna, be devoted to me, rely on me, and so keep working " The refrain of the *Bhagavad Gita* is "*anasakti*," "*nissangata*" (non-attachment) It dislikess and avoids the very word "*asakti*," attachment It repeatedly insists that one should remain unattached while performing action, that one should act

without desire and without hatred, that one should act regardless of the fruit It is this *Bhagavad Gita* that says here, "Arjuna be attached to me" But here, we must remember that attachment to the Lord is a noble thing It is not like the attachment to any object in the world *Saguna* and *nirguna* are closely intertwined *Saguna* can never be removed from its *nirguna* ground *Nirguna* needs the sap of *saguna* A man who is ever busy doing his duty is worshipping God through work But the moisture, the *rasa* of love, should go into the worship "*maamanusmara yuddhya cha*" "Work with me in mind" Yes, work is *puja*, worship But the *bhavana* within should be kept alive The mere offering of flowers is not *puja* There must go with it *bhavana*, the appropriate inner attitude *Puja* with flowers is one way of worship, doing good actions is another way But in both the moisture of *bhavana* is essential If when we offer flowers, there is no *bhavana* within, it is as if we are flinging flowers on a mere stone Therefore, the real thing is *bhavana*, the inward approach. Whether we make the approach through form or the formless, through knowledge or devotion, through action or love, it is essentially the same. The final experience from one is the same as that from the other

Look at Uddhava and Arjuna I have taken a big jump from the *Ramayana* to the *Mahabharata* But then I have a right to do it, for Rama and Krishna are both one As Bharata stands to Lakshmana, so Arjuna does to Uddhava Wherever Krishna is, there Uddhava has to be He cannot bear even a moment's separation from Krishna He is ever absorbed in the service of Sri Krishna Without Krishna, the whole world appears dull and tasteless to him Arjuna too was Krishna's friend, but he lived far away in Delhi Arjuna was a servant of Krishna, he was the doer of His work, but while Krishna was in Dvaraka, Arjuna was in Hastinapura Such was their relationship When it was time for Krishna to leave his body, he said to Uddhava, "Udho, I am going now" Udahava pleaded, "Won't you take me with you? Come, let us go together" But Krishna answered, "I am not for that When the sun sets, it leaves its brightness in fire, so let me leave my light with you" Thus, the Lord made his final arrangements and sent Uddhava forth with the light of *jnana* Later, on his journey, Uddhava comes to know through Rishi Maitreya that the Lord had returned to His home in

Vaikuntha But his heart did not grieve in the least over the news, it did not appear to him that anything much had happened You know the saying, "The master died and pupil cried The teaching and the learning were both wasted !" Such was not the state of Uddhava He did not feel that there was any separation All his life he had performed *saguna* worship and lived in the presence of the Lord But now he had begun to experience the joy even of *nirguna* In this way he had traversed the path to *nirguna* *Saguna* may come first, but the next step of *nirguna* has to follow, otherwise there is no completeness

Arjuna's state is just the opposite What had Krishna asked him to do ? He had entrusted to him the duty of protecting the women after his lifetime Arjuna had gone from Delhi to Dvaraka and was returning with the ladies At Hissar, in the Punjab, on the way, some robbers stopped and plundered them Arjuna was considered the most valiant man of his age, he was famous as a hero He was celebrated as Jaya, the victorious he had confroned Siva face to face and made Him bow to him And this Arjuna, in the neighbourhood of Ajmer, took to his feet and fled, Because he had parted from Krishna, his mind was quite upset, it was as if he had lost his life All that remained was an unsupported corpse The fact is that Arjuna, the *nirguna* worshipper who had constantly performed *karma* and lived for away from Krishna, found in the end that this separation was unbearable His *nirguna* gave way at last under this stress It was as if he had come to the end of all *karma* *Saguna* experience came at last to complete his *nirguna bhakti* That is, *saguna* has to go towards *nirguna* and *nirguna* has to come towards *saguna* Thus each completes the other

(65) Both are One—Personal Experience

Therefore, when we begin to describe the differences between the *saguna* and the *nirguna* worshipper, it becomes difficult In the end, *saguna* and *nirguna* become one Though the stream of *bhakti* springs from *saguna*, it reaches *nirguna* in the end Here is an old story I had gone to Vaikom to observe the satyagraha there I remembered the geographical fact that Sankaracharya's birthplace was on the border of Malabar I had a feeling that Sankara's village, Kaladi, was somewhere near I asked the Malayali gentleman who accompanied me He said, "It is some

10 or 12 miles from here Do you want to go there ?" I said I did not I was going to see the satyagraha in progress, and it did not seem proper to go elsewhere So on that occasion I did not go to that village Even now it seems to me that I was right in not going there then But that night, when I went to bed, that village of Kaladi and the image of Sankaracharya stood before my eyes again and again I could not sleep That experience is still with me, as fresh today as it was then Again and again that night, I thought of Sankaracharya—of the power of his *jnana*, his divine certitude in *advaita*, the extraordinary, glowing *vairagya*, non-attachment, which convinced him that *samasara*, this phenomenal life, was all false, of the majesty of his language and the boundless help I have received from him All night long these images stood before me Then I realised how *nirguna* is filled to the brim with *saguna* Even seeing him face to face would not have evoked such love Even *nirguna* is filled full with *saguna* For the most part, I do not write letters to friends to enquire about their welfare But even when I do not write to a friend, the thought of him is ever present, it fills my mind Thus, *saguna* lies hidden in *nirguna* *Saguna* and *nirguna* are indeed one Placing an image before us and worshipping it with visible outward service, on the one hand, and on the other, being constantly concerned inwardly with the world's welfare while performing no outward acts of worship—both these have the same worth and value

(66) Therefore Let us Attain the Qualities of the Bhakta

Finally, we must admit that it is difficult to distinguish between what is *saguna* and what is *nirguna* What looks like *saguna* from one point of view may be *nirguna* from another. We worship *saguna* by placing a stone in front of us and performing *puja* In this stone we conceive the presence of God In our mother and in saints, we see the visible presence of *chaitanya*, the living spirit In them *jnana*, love and warmth of heart shine clear But we do not regard them as the Supreme, we do not worship them Such people, filled with the living spirit, are seen by us all We should therefore, serve them, we should see in them the concrete manifestation of the Supreme And yet, instead of doing this, people prefer to see the Lord in a stone To see the Lord in a stone is in a sense the ultimate limit of *nirguna* In the

saints, in one's parents, in one's neighbours, love and knowledge and willingness to help are manifest It is easy to conceive the presence of God in them, but it is difficult to conceive it in a stone The stone that lies in the *Narmada*, we regard as Siva. Is not this *nirguna* worship ? But, on the contrary, if we do not conceive the presence of God in the stone, where else can we conceive it ? It is only the stone that is fit to be the image of the Lord It is changeless, full of peace Light or darkness, heat or could, the stone remains the same This changeless, passionless stone is best fitted to be a symbol of the Lord Father mother, neighbour, the people, all these are subject to passion and change Therefore, in one sense, it is more difficult to serve these than to serve the stone

The truth of the matter is that *saguna* and *nirguna* complete each other *Saguna* is easy and *nirguna* difficult But from another point of view, *saguna* is difficult and *nirguna* easy Both these means take us to the same end The Fifth Section told us that the *yogi* who works all the twenty-four hours of the day and yet does nothing is the same as the *sannyasi* who does nothing all the day and yet does everything Similarly, the state of action, which is *saguna*, and the *yoga* of *sannvasa* which is *nirguna*, are the same The difficulty which the Lord faced in answering the question, "Is *sannyasa* or *yoga*, renunciation or action, better ?", the same difficulty the Lord faces here Finally it became necessary to decide on the basis of which was easier and which was more difficult Otherwise action and renunciation, *saguna* and *nirguna*, are both the same In the end, the Lord says, "Arjuna whether you are a *saguna bhakta* or a *nirguna bhakta*, it does not matter Only be a *bhakta* and not a stupid stone" And after saying this, He describes the qualities of a *bhakta* Nectar may be sweet, but we have had no chance of tasting it But the sweetness of these qualities we can taste for ourselves There is no need to imagine them Let us experience these qualities of the *bhakta* in the Twelfth Section are—like those of the *sthitaprajna* in the Second Section—to be read every day, reflected upon, and brought into practice by stages so that our lives may gain strength In this way, we should, little, by little, turn our lives towards God.

XIII

THE SELF AND THE NON-SELF

(67) Distinguishing between Body and Soul Helps Karma-Yoga

Vyasadev has poured into the *Bhagavad Gita* the essence of his life He has written many other long works The *Mahabharata* alone contains a hundred or a hundred and twenty-five thousand slokas In Sanskrit, the very word Vyasa has acquired the meaning of extensiveness But, in the *Gita*, he did not pursue elaboration As Euclid in his "Elements of Geometry" states propositions and formulates principles, Vyasadev, in the *Gita*, gives us the principles useful for living In the *Bhagavad Gita*, there is no long discussion, nothing elaborate The main reason for this is that everything stated in the *Gita* is meant to be tested in the life of every man, it is intended to be verified in practice Only what is necessary for the conduct of life is set down in the *Gita* Vyasa's intention too was only this, and hence he was content with a brief statement of principles From this contentment we can see for ourselves how great was his faith in truth and self-realisation When a thing is true, there is no need to use any arguments to substantiate it

The main reason why we look constantly to the *Gita* is that, whenever we need help, we may get it from the *Gita* And, indeed, we always do get it. Because the *Gita* is a science applicable to life, it emphasises *svadharma* If there is one strong support for man's life, it is the performance of *svadharma* All the superstructure has to be built on *svadharma*. The strength of the superstructure depends on the strength of the foundation It is the performance of *svadharma* that the *Gita* calls *karma* Around this *karma*, which is the performance of *svadharma*, the Gita arranges a number of other matters To safeguard this, many *vikarmas* are conceived To give beauty to the performance of *svadharma*, to crown it with success, it should be given all the help and support that it needs That is why we have been considering many such aids so far Many of them were in the form of *bhakti* Today, in the Thirteenth Section, we come to another aid in the performance of *svadharma*, this is related to the intellectual aspect

The *Gita* stresses everywhere that the man who performs

svadharma should give up the fruit One must act, but one must also renounce the fruit Water the tree, tend it with care, but do not desire to enjoy its shade or fruit or flower This is *karma-yoga* through the practice of *svadharma. Karma-yoga* does not mean merely the performance of *karma* Action takes place all the time, everywhere in creation There is no need to say it, but the *karma* that is the performance of *savadharma*—not mere action, but acting well and renouncing the fruit—this is easy to say, and appears easy to understand, but it is very difficult to put into practice For it is considered that the motive force behind any action is the desire for fruit To act without the desire for fruit is to turn things upside down It is the very opposite of the way the world proceeds When a man works unremittingly, we say that the *karma-yoga* of the *Gita* fills his life We say that the life of a man who works constantly is full of *karma-yoga*, but this is a loose use of language All this is not *karma-yoga* as explained in the *Gita* Among millions of people who perform action—not mere action, but even action in the form of *svadharma*—it is difficult to get a few who perform the *karma-yoga* of the *Gita* A perfect *karma-yogi* in the true and subtle meaning of the *Gita*—perhaps we shall never find To perform *karma* and yet to give up its fruit is a most uncommon thing So far, the *Gita* has been making and maintaining just this distinction

Another distinction which reinforces this is given in the Thirteenth Section The distinction between body and spirit helps the separation of action from the desire for the fruit This is set forth in the Thirteenth Section The figure which we see with our eyes, we call an image, a form, a body But even after seeing with our eyes the outer form, we still have to enter into the object and see it from within We have to remove the armour, the outer skin, of the fruit and taste the pulp within Even the coconut one has to break to see what there is within Despite its rough sharp exterior, the jack-fruit is full of sweet juicy pulp

Whether we look at ourselves or others, we have to distinguish the inside from the outside Now, what is the significance of removing the skin ? It means that, in every object, the outer skin and the inner substance should be distinguished Every object has two forms—an outer body and an inner soul This is also true of *karma* The outer result is the body of *karma*,

The inner purity that results from *karma* is its soul Let us give up the body, the outward result of the performance of *svadharma*, and let as bear in our hearts the essence of action, the soul which is inner purity Let us acquire the habit of looking at things in this way, of seeing everything in its essence, setting aside the body To the eye, the heart and the mind, we should give the exercise, the training and the habit of such discrimination. In every thing we should leave aside the body and reverence the soul This distinction has been made in the Thirteenth Section, for us to think about

(68) The Fundamentals of Growth

The habit of looking for the essence of things is noble indeed. If only we could acquire it from childhood onwards, how good it would be ! This is something that one should make one's own. It appears to many that *adhyatmavidya*, the science of the spirit, has no connection with ordinary life Others feel that, even if such a connection were possible, it is not desirable If we could arrange to train people from childhood onwards to distinguish between the body and the spirit, it would be a matter for joy This is a problem in the art of teaching As a result of faulty education, the minds of children today are filled with evil *samskaras*, wrong tendencies This education does not carry us beyond the bounds of the feeling, "I am only the body " The activities all relate to the body, and yet the quality that the body should attain, the form that should be given to it, is found nowhere While thus vain worship is offered to the body, no attention is paid to the joys of the soul This condition has resulted from the present system of education Worship is offered day and night to the idol of the body

From childhood we are taught to worship this deity, the body. If you hurt your foot, it is enough if you apply a little clay to it The child would be satisfied with this, might feel that even this treatment is unnecessary He would think nothing of a scratch or an abrasion But not so his parents and guardians. They would draw the child near and fuss over it, saying, "Oh dear ! How badly you have hurt yourself ! How did it happen ? Where did you fall ? What a deep cut ! Look, it's bleeding !" Even if the child is not crying, they make him cry What is one to say of this achievement ? Children are constantly told not to

jump about, or play, for fear of falling and getting hurt They are given a one-sided education which teaches them to think only of the body

Even when we praise or blame the child, it is in reference to the body We say, "How dirty you are!" How it hurts the child, and how false is this identification of the child with the body! It is true that there is dirt and it is true that it needs to be washed off But instead of casually washing off the dirt from the body, why attack the child? He cannot bear it He becomes thoroughly miserable While his heart, his inner self, is all purity and cleanliness, why this wrong attribution of dirt? In reality the child is far from dirty The child is the Lord Himself, absolute in his beauty, sweetness, holiness and love In the child too He is manifest, but we call the child dirty! What is this connection between him and dirt? Since the child does not understand this at all, he cannot bear this attack on him He is deeply disturbed, and such disturbance stands in the way of improvement Hence, we should explain things clearly to him and keep him clean and tidy

Instead of this, we impress on the child's mind the idea that he is the body There is an important principle in the art of teaching that we should recognise The teacher should have the *bhavana*, the attitude, that the child is beautiful in every way. If the pupil gives a wrong answer, he is slappen What is the connection between the slap and the error? If he comes late to school, a blow descends on him The blood rushes up to his face, but will that make him come earlier to school? Can this swifter flow of blood tell him what the time is? To tell the truth, by such treatment, we only strengthen the animal in him We confirm the *bhavana* that he is the body We build his life on the foundation of fear If we really want him to improve, we cannot do so by the use of force, which only heightens the body sense One improves only when one realises, "I am different from the body"

There is no harm in being aware of one's defects either of the body or the mind The awareness helps one to remove these defects But one must understand clearly that one is not the body 'I' am altogether distinct from the body, separats, entirely beautiful, bright, holy, free of imperfection When a man examines himself to remove his imperfections, he makes a

distinction between himself and the body So when others draw his attention to the imperfections in him, he does not lose his temper Instead, he considers carefully the faults in the mechanism of his body or mind and tries to set them right. On the contrary, a person who does not make this distinction between the body and himself cannot improve himself at all. "This body, this lump of flesh, this image of clay, this is me"—if a man thinks thus, how could he improve himself ? Improvement becomes possible only when we began to realise that the body is given to us as a means, an instrument When someone points out that something is wrong with my *charkha*, do I get angry ? On the contrary, any fault found in it, I set right The body too is exactly like this The body is a tool with which to cultivate the field of the Lord If it gets out of order, it should of course be set right forthwith The body being an instrument, we should keep ourselves distinct from it, and try to get rid of defects in it. I am separate from this instrument I am its master and owner, I make it work and receive its noble service From childhood onwards, we should cultivate this attitude of remaining separate from the body

As the spectator who stands aloof from the game sees, most clearly its merits and defects, it is only when we stand aloof from the body, mind and intellect that we can observe the merits and defects in them Some people say, "My memory is getting feeble Please tell me what do to about it " When a man says this, it is clear that he looks on him-self as different from his memory He says, "My memory has become dull," as he might say of any other of his instruments, that it has lost its quality One may mislay one's child, one may mislay one's book, but one cannot mislay oneself When at the end he dies, the body is utterly lost and turns to nothing, but he himself remains the same He is whole, and free from all disease This is a thing to understand. Once we understand this, we are released from many conflicts and difficulties

(69) Attachment to the Body Obstructs Living

As a result of the widespread assumption that the body is oneself, man has thoughtlessly constructed for himself a large variety of means for cherishing the body The very sight of them is terrifying Man's constant concern is that the body is getting

old, it is becoming thin and dry, and yet it must by some means be perpetuated But, after all, how long can you keep alive this body this outer skin ? It is only till death, isn't it ? When the fell sergeant Death presents his warrant, can the body resist it for a moment ? In the presence of Death, all one's pride freezes And yet, for the sake of this frail body, man accumulates innumerable means of support Day and night, he is anxious about his body Nowadays, they say that there is no harm in eating meat to preserve the body The human body, then, is so precious that we should eat meat to preserve it They say that the animal's body is less precious Why ? Why is the human body so precious ? What is the reason ? Can it be that the animal eats what it likes, that it has no idea beyond satisfaction of needs ? Man does not act like this Man takes care of the creatures around him That is why the human body has value, that is why it is precious But by eating meat we destroy that which makes the human body precious My good man, your greatness depends, does it not, on the fact that you live with self-control, that you labour for the safety of all beings, that you care for them and cherish them ? Is it not because of this quality in you, which is not found in animals, that man is considered nobler ? That is why it is said that human birth is difficult to attain But if we destroy the foundation of man's greatness and nobility, how can the superstructure remain ? If man too, without shrinking, behaves like any other animal and lives on flesh, it would be like cutting off from the tree the branch on which one sits

Medical science is performing many miracles today Into the body of a living animal they inject disease germs and watch its effects The knowledge gained by giving all this pain to a living creature is used for the sake of the worthless human body And all this goes on in the name of "compassion to creatures" Producing disease germs in the animal's body, we take out the serum for injecting into the human body Many such terrible actions are being done This body, for whose sake we do so much, is as brittle as glass and will be shattered to pieces any moment There is no certainty how long it will last Though all these efforts are for safeguarding the human body, what do we find in actual experience ? As we go on trying to preserve the delicate human body, it goes on disintegrating It is not as if we do not understand all this, and yet we keep trying to fatten it and make

much of it

We never consider what kind of food will make the mind *sativik*, make it bright and clear What one should do, what aids one should seek to make the mind pure, the intellect clear, we never think All that we think of is how to increase the weight of our body, how the clay of the earth can be plastered on to this body Just as cowdung cakes fall off the wall when they are dry, this clay plrster on our body disintegrates, leaving it as it was What then in the use of adding to the body all this unbearable weight of clay ? Why make the body so fat ? The body is a tool, and we should certainly do all that is necessary to keep it fit A machine should be made to work, it must be well used But can one identify oneself with the machine ? And should we not think in the same way of this machine, the body ?

The truth is that the body is not an end, but a means Once we are confirmed in this attitude, all this fussing over the body will cease Life will present a different appearance to us Then we would see no merit in decking the body Indeed a piece of ordinary cloth will do to cover it But no We want the cloth to be soft and smooth, dyed in beautiful colours, with good patterns and a border For the sake of this, we make a number of people labour What is all this for ? Does not the Creator know His job ? If the body needs all these patterns, would He not have spent on your body and mine the skill He has shown on the leopard's skin ? Was it beyond His powers ? He could have fixed to our bucks a magnificant tail like the peacock's But the Lord had made man's skin of a single colour The slightest spot on it spoils its beauty Man is beautiful as he is It is not God's intention that he should be beautified further Is not Creation extraordinarily beautiful ? All that man has to do is to behold it with his eyes and be content But he has missed his way They say that Germany has destroyed our colours My dear man, the colour of your heart was already dead It is only then that you developed a taste for these artificial dyes As a result, you have become dependent on others, You have been needlessly caught in this whirlpool of beautifying the body Cultivating the mind, developing the intellect, and making the heart beautiful—these have been neglected !

(70) "That Thou Art"

Therefore the thought that the Lord gives us in the Thirteenth

Section is most valuable "You are not the body, you are the Self" "*Tat tvam asi*"—"You are indeed the Self" This thought, this saying, is most noble, pure and holy This great truth—"You are not this outer covering, the skin, but the true indestructible fruit within" —finds an important place in Sanskrit literature The moment there arises in the mind of man the thought,—"That are you," "I am not this body I am the Self Supreme"—a new joy, unknown before, wells up in the heart These words that spring from the heart are filled with the subtle thought, "Nothing, no one, in the world can destroy this form of mine"

I am the Self, indestructible, flawless, transcending the body The body has been given to me for the sake of the Self Whenever there is a chance of the Supreme principle being defiled, I shall, in order to safeguard it, throw away this body I shall ever be ready to offer up the body in sacrifice in order to keep the flame of the Self brightly burning Is it to compass my own defeat that I am riding the body ? I must hold sway over the body I shall put it to good use, through it I shall increase the welfare and prosperity of the world "I shall feel the three worlds with joy" For the sake of a great ideal, I shall throw away the body, shouting, "Victory to the Lord" The rich man, when his clothes become a little dirty, throws them away and puts on new ones I shall treat the body in the same way It is needed for work But when it becomes useless for the purpose, why should I hesitate to cast in aside ?

This too is the lesson we learn from satyagraha The body and the Self are two different things The day a man discovers this secret, his real education, his real growth begins It is only then that satyagraha will succeed Therefore it is necessary for each one of us to impress this *bhavana* on our hearts The body is only a means, an accasion, an instrument given by the Lord The day the need for it ceases, it must be thrown away In summer we put away our warm winter wear, in the morning we lay aside the blankets we use at night, we remove in the evening the clothes we were in the morning We should regard the body in the same light As long as the body is useful, we should keep it, but when it is no more useful, we should fling it aside The Lord teaches us this device to help the growth of the soul.

(71) An End to Tyranny

So long as we do not realise that we are distinct from the body, wicked people will tyrannise over us and enslave us There is no knowing what injury they will do to us It is because of fear that tyranny becomes possible A *rakshasa* caught hold of a man, and made him work for him ceaselessly If he paused a little, he threatened him saying, "I shall eat you up I shall destory you." At first the man was afrad, but when he could stand it no longer, he said, "All right, eat me up if you want to " But how could the *rakshasa* afford to eat him up ? What he wanted was a servant, a slave If he were eaten up, who would do the work ? The *rakshasa* was merely threatening When he got the reply, "All right, eat me up," his power come to an end Tyrants know that there subjects cling to the body By inflicting pain on the body, they can enslave and control others But when you give up attachment to the body you become an emperor, you achieve freedom All power comes into your hands No one can exercise authority over you The very basis of tyranny breaks down For the basis of tyranny is the *bhavana*, 'I am the body " Knowing that through suffering inflicted on the body they can tyrannise over others, they use threatening language

"I am the body"—this *bhavana* of mine arouses in others the desire to tyrannise, to inflict pain But what did the great English martyr Cranmer say ? 'If you would burn me, by all means, do Here, burn this right hand first, for this hand hath offended." In the same way, Latimer said, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as (I trust) shall never be put out " Who could burn such men ? They lit a fire of *dharma* which no one can put out Their task was to burn this candle of the body and spread everywhere the light of truth Socrates was sentenced to death by poison He said then, "I am old This body is due to be destroyed in a short while What valour do you show by destroying that which is about to perish ? Consider, some day the body has to die Where is the credit in killing that which is mortal ?" The night before he was to drink hemlock and die, he taught his pupils about the immortality to the soul He described with zest the effects the poison would have on the body He did not shrink from it in the least As soon as he finished speaking of the immortality of the soul, one of his pupils asked him, "What rities would

you like us to perform when you are no more ?" He replied, "How wonderful ! They will kill me and you will bury me ! Those who kill me are my enemies, and you who bury me are my great friends ! They kill me cleverly and you bury me cleverly ! Who are you to bury me ? I am as clever as you Where will you bury me ? In the earth or in a tomb ? No one can kill me, and no one can bury me Has all my teaching been in vain ? The Self is immortal Who can kill it, who can bury it ?" And, indeed, for twenty-five centuries, this great man Socrates has been standing aloft, watching everyone else being buried !

(72) Faith in the Power of the Supreme Self

No true safety is possible so long as there is attachment to the body and consequent fear There is only a sense of insecurity When one shuts one's eyes, there is a fear that a snake might bite one or robbers might attack One sleeps with a stick by one's side If you ask why, you are told, "It is good to have it there, a thief might turn up " My dear man, what if the thief takes up that stick and hits you on your head ? It is as if you are keeping a stick ready in case the thief forgets to bring one What gives you the courage to go to sleep ? At this moment you are in the hands of the world It is only when you are awake that you can protect yourself Who guards you when you sleep ?

I go to sleep trusting to some power, I sleep trusting to the same power that protects the tiger and the cow when they sleep Even the tiger goes to sleep Even the tiger, which being at enmity with the world is constantly looking back, goes to sleep If it had no faith in that power, it would be necessary to make an arrangement for some tigers to keep watch while others sleep The power trusting to which the lion and the tiger and the wolf go to sleep, that power pervades all creation, and in its lap, I too am asleep The child sleeps, free from care, in its mother's lap He is then the emperor of the world You and I should train ourselves to sleep in the lap of the universal mother in love and trust and knowledge I should become better acquainted with the power by which all my life proceeds I should understand it more and more clearly The more I trust to it, the more secure I will be The more I experience this power, the more I grow In the Thirteenth Section, something is shown of the steps of this progress

(73) Progressive Realisation of the Supreme Self

So long as the thought of the Self within the body does not arise, man is absorbed in ordinary activities When hungry he eats, when thirsty he drinks, when drowsy he falls off to sleep - he knows nothing beyond these For these he fights The thought in his mind is how to get these things In this way he is immesed in activities relating to the body Progress begins only later All this time, the Self remains merely watching Like a mother watching her baby crawling near the well, with the same care the Self watches us Quietly, it watches all these activities This is called the stage of the "*upadrashtaa,*" the witness watching

In this state, the Self watches without assenting But the *jiva,* the soul, which till now acted in all things identifying itself with the body wakes up The knowledge suddenly dawns upon it that it has been living like an animal When the soul begins to think like this, the foundations of ethics are laid It examines every issue asking, "Is it right ? Is it wrong ?" It starts exercising the power of discrimination The power of analysis develops It stops acting merely on selfish impulse Discipline takes the place of self-indulgence When the soul thus enters the domain of ethics, the Self does not merely stand aside and watch It express approval from within, saying, "Well done !" Now it cases to be merely an "*upadrashtaa,*" a witness, and becomes an "*anumantaa,*" one who assents and approves

A hungry man comes to your door when you have just sat down to eat You give the food away to him When, late at night, what you did comes back to mind, you hear the still small voice of the Self saying, "You have done well " When the mother pats her child on the back and says, 'Well done, my child !" he has the filling that he has gained the whole world Even so, the approving voice of the Self within fills us with joy and strength Now the soul has left the path of pleasure and planted its feet firmly on the path of right conduct

Then we come to the next stage Through doing his duty, man tries to cleanse his mind and heart But as he does this, a point is reached when he gets tired Then the soul begins to pray, "Oh Lord ! I have come to the end of my efforts Give me more strength, more power " Until a man realises that he cannot achieve success by his own efforts, however hard, he cannot understand the secret of prayer When he has put all his strength into

his efforts and finds them inadequate, he should call on the Supreme with a sad and yearning heart, as Draupadi did The stream of the Lord's compassion and succour flows ceaselessly Whoever is thirsty can drink of it as of right, whoever has need, can seek fulfilment there This is the relationship in the third stage The Supreme now comes very close He comes running now to help and does not merely offer words of praise

At first, the Lord stood at a distance As the teacher, giving his pupil a question to answer, stands aside and watches, so too, as long as the soul adheres to the life of pleasure, the Supreme stands aloof and says "All right, play your pranks " Then the *jiva* enters the sphere of ethics Now the Supreme can remain neutral no longer When he sees that good things are happening through the *jiva*, the Lord looks in and says, "Well done !" When through such good actions the grosser faults of the mind are removed, and the time comes for cleansing the subtle impurities, the man finds all his efforts are inadequate, he calls on the Lord for help Then He answers the call and comes running Whenever the *bhakta's* strength daclines, He comes and stands before him *Suryanarayana* (the Lord in the form of the sun), the sergeant of the whole world, is ever standing at your door He will not break open a closed door and enter, for he is a servant He gives the respect due to the master He will not knock The master sleeps within, and so the servant sun stands waiting outside But let the door be opened ever so little, he will enter with all his brightness and drive away the darkness The Lord is just like that If you seek His help, He will come with arms outstretched On the banks of the river Bhima in Pandharpur, He stands ready with His stands on His hips Tukaram and others describe Vitthal as ready to save, with arms outstretched Through the open nostril, the air rushes in Through the open door, the light comes flooding in But even this comparison with air and light is not good enough The Lord is nearer to us than they He is more eager to help us He is the *upadrashtaa*, the witness, and the *anumantaa*, the one who assents, but He is also, in every way, the *bhartaa*, the support When we are enable to purify the mind, and cry helplessly, 'My life is in your hands, Oh Lord, save me !" or pray, "You are my sole helper, I need your support," how can He, who is all compassion, stand aside ? The Lord, the helper of the devotee, He who makes perfect all that is incomplete, comes running to us. Then He

washes hides for Raidas, sells meat for the butcher Sajan, weaves cloth for Kabir, and grinds at the stone with Janabai

The next stage is to dedicate to the Lord even the fruit of action, which we receive by His grace At this stage, the *jiva* says to the Lord "The fruit is yours Enjoy it" Namadev sat down obstinatly insisting, "Lord, you have to drink this milk" What a lovely situation ! The milk which is the result of all actions, he dedicates to the Lord ! In this way, all the earnings and savings of his life, he dedicates to the Lord, to whose grace he owes them When Dharmaputra was about to set foot in heaven, the dog that was with him was not allowed to enter Then Dharmaputra renounced in one instant all the merits he had accumulated in a lifetime—the right to heaven In the same way, the *bhakta* gives over to the Lord all the fruits of action The Lord who was *upadrashtaa, anumantaa, bhartaa,* has now become the *bhoktaa*, the enjoyer The *jiva* has now reached the state when, through the body, the Lord enjoys pleasure

Hereafter, one must give up making *samkalpa*, forming resolutions There are three stages in action First we make a resolve, then we act, and finally the fruit comes to us The fruit that through the grace of the Lord came from the action, even that has been given over to the Lord He who does the action is the Lord He who tastes the fruit is the Lord Now, let the resolve too be made by the Lord In this way let the beginning, the middle and the end of action be filled with the Lord Jnanadev says, "The water flows without speaking back wherever the gardener turns it, Let us be like this water always" The water nourishes the flower plant or the fruit tree at the bidding of the gardener In the same way, let the Lord decide what action should take place through my hands Let me entrust to Him the responsibility for all the resolves of my mind When I have put all my weight on the horse, why carry a few things on my head ? Why not put them too on the horse's back ? Even if I carry them on my head, does not the horse that carries me carry that burden too ? Why not then put all the weight straight on the horse's back ? In this way, all the agitations, the dance and play of life, all the growth, become in the end the Lord's own He becomes indeed the *mahesvara*, the Great Lord, of my life. Growing in this way, all one's life is filled with God Only the curtain of the body remains When that is removed, *jiva* and *Siva*, the

soul and the Supreme Self, become one Thus

> "Upadrashtaa anumantaa cha bhartaa bhoktaa mahesvarah
> "The Lord is the witness, the assentor, the support, the enjoyer"

Thus, progressively we should learn to experience the Lord At first the Lord watches as an impartial witness Then when the life of morality begins, He encourages us when good things take place through us When the devotee discovers that his own efforts are inadequate to cleanse the subtler impurities of the mind, and calls on him, this helper of the helpless rushes to his aid After this, we have to give over to the Lord the fruits of action, and make Him the enjoyer And, in the end, we should surrender to Him the right to resolve and thus fill all our life with Him This is the ultimate goal of man, which the *sadhaka*, the seeker, has to reach, flying on the twin wings of *karma-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga*, of action and devotion

(74) Humility, Absence of Pride and Other Basic Means to Jnana

To achieve all this, the firm foundation of the practice of morality is indispensable We should discriminate between truth and falsehood, and follow only truth We should distinguish between the essential and the accidental and hold fast to the essential We should throw away the shell and keep the pearl In this way we should begin life Then with the help of one's own efforts and the grace of God, one should make further progress If throughout this process we practise discrimination between the body and Self, it would be a help At such times I call to mind the sacrifice of Jesus, They were hammering nails into His body It is said that then the words came out of His mouth, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" But soon Lord Jesus collected Himself and said, "Thy will be done Lord, foegive them for they know not what they do" There is a great secret in this This shows clearly how far the Self should be separated from the body What the goal should be, and how near to it we can get, we can learn from the life of Jesus We reach the point where we see the body being peeled off like armour, like the skin of a fruit Whenever I think of how the spirit should be distinguished from the body, the life of Jesus

and this final scene appear before my eyes How to be quite other than the body, how to sever the link with it, this the life of Christ shows us clearly

Until we acquire the power to discriminate between truth and falsehood, it is not possible to distinguish between the body and the Self This discrimination this knowledge, should pervade evey fibre of our being The word "*jnana*," we take to mean "to know." But to know with the mind is not *jnana*, true knowledge To stuff one's mouth with food is not the same as eating The food in the mouth should be masticated, passed through the gullet into the stomach, digested, converted into blood, and circulated throughout the body to nourish it Only then will it become real food In the same way, mere knowledge of the mind is unavailing That knowledge should pervade all one's life and flow through one's heart It should express itself through the hands and the feet, the eyes and every other member One should attain a state when all the organs of perception and action work from knowledge Therefore, in the Thirteenth Section, the Lord has give a beautiful description of *jnana* The marks of this *jnana* are like those of the *sthitarprajna*—humility freedom from pride, *ahimsa*, straightness, tolerance Twenty such qualities, the Lord enumerates He does not merely say that these qualities are called *jnana*, he says clearly that their opposites are *ajnana*. The means to *jnana* are themselves *jnana* Socrates regarded good qualities as themselves *jnana* The means and the end are identical

These twenty means mentioned in the *Gita*, Jnanadev makes into eighteen These are described in the *Gita* in five slokas, but Jnanadev in *Jnaneswari* describes them lovingly in 700 *ovis* (verses) He was eager that these good qualities should spread through society, that the power of the Lord who is Truth should prevail He has put all his experience into the description of these qualities This has been of inestimable help to the Marathi-speaking people These qualities pervaded Jnanadev's life A blow that fell on a buffalo caused a swelling on Jnanadev's back He had such fellow-feeling for all creatures It is out of this compassionate heart of Jnanadev that the *Jnaneswari*, his commentary on the *Gita*, emerged He has analysed these qualities thoroughly We should read his description of these qualities, meditate on them and receive them into our hearts I consider

myself fortunate in being able to enjoy this in Jnaadev's sweet language I shall deem it my good fortune to be born again if my tongue can utter this sweet language of his. The substance is that we should make our lives grow more and more by distinguishing the body from the spirit and trying to fill our being with God.

XIV

THE GUNAS—BUILDING UP AND BREAKING DOWN

(75) Analysis of Nature

Brothers, this Fourteenth Section in one sense completes the Thirteenth As a matter of fact, the Self has no need to do anything It is complete in itself The natural movement of one's soul is upwards But just as any object is dragged down when a heavy weight is tied to it, the burden of the body drags down the soul We saw in the last Section that, if by some means we could separate body and soul, we shall progress This may be very difficult, but the results too are great If we could only snap the fetters of the body that bind the feet of the soul, we shall experience a great joy Then we shall not be miserable because of the body's sufferings We shall become free If a man achieves victory over this body, who in the world can exercise power over him ? He who rules himself rules over the whole world Therefore, remove the domination of the body over the soul The pleasures and pains of the body are all alien and do not belong to us Between them and the Self there is not the slightest connection

To what extent we should keep all these pains and pleasures distinct from ourselves, I illustrated from the story of Jesus He has shown us that when the body is breaking, the mind can be kept in peace and joy But this separation of the body from the Self is the result not only of discrimination, but of self-control Tukaram speaks of the strength of *vairagya* (non-attachment) in association with *viveka* (discrimination) Both are necessary *Vairagya*, non-attachment, is itself a kind of self-control or renunciation The Fourteenth Section describes the directions in which we should exercise self-control The oars propel the boat, but the rudder guides it. The oars and the

rudder are both needed In the same way, for separating the Self from the pains and pleasures of the body, both discrimination and self-control are needed

Just as the physician examines the patient's body and prescribes medicine, the Lord in the Fourteenth Section examines and analyses the whole of nature and diagnoses its maladies Here nature has been neatly classified There is a principle of division in statecraft If you can divide the forces of the enemy in front of you, you can readily gain victory The Lord does the some here

In you and me, in all beings, in all things moving and unmoving, nature is made up of three strands Just as there are three things in *ayurved, kapha* (phlegm), *pitta* (bils) and *vata* (wind), nature is made up of the three *gunas—sattva, rajas* and *tamas* All space is filled with a mixture of these three A little more here and a little less there, that's all the difference If we separate the Self from these three, we can separate it from the body To examine and conquer these tree *gunas*, is itself the way of separating the Self from the body Through self-control one should conquer these, one by one, until one approaches in the end the most important thing, that which is beyond the *gunas*

(76) The Cure for Tamas—Bodily Labour

Let us take *tamas* first In the condition of modern society, we see terrible manifestations of *tamas* Its chief manifestation laziness From this spring sleep and neglectfulness Laziness, sleep and neglectfulness, if we have overcome these, we may take it that we have conquered *tamas* The most terrible of these is laziness The best of men may be ruined by it It is an enemy which will destroy all the peace and happiness of society It corrupts everyone, from the lowest to the highest It spares no one It lies in wait to pounce upon us At the slightest opportunity it comes and settles within us A little more food than usual, and it drives us to our beds If we sleep a little too much, our eyes are dull with sloth As long as we have not overcome this laziness, all our efforts are in vain But then we look eagerly forward to laziness Our desire is that we should work day and night for a while, and save up some money so that we may spend the rest of our lives in leisure The purpose of

earning a lot of money is to prepare for a life of laziness later We generally believe that leisure is necessary in old age But this is a mistake If we lead our life in the right way, we should be working even in old age With increasing experience, our usefulness should also increase Is that the time to seek rest ?

We must take good care that laziness has no chance King Nala was a great man And yet they say that when he washed his feet he left a little spot dry, and Kali (the evil spirit) entered through it King Nala was absolutely pure, clean in every way, but he left a tiny part of his foot unwashed And because of this touch of laziness, Kali entered into him But we expose the whole body Laziness can enter in anywhere it likes When the body is lazy, the mind and intellect are lazy too Society today is built on this laziness A great deal of misery has arisen from this If we could cure this laziness, much, if not the whole, of this misery could be removed

At present, everywhere, there is talk of social reform We are constantly discussing the minimum confort the common man should have, and the structure of society necessary to bring this about On the one hand, there is excessive comfort, and on the other absolute privation On the one side wealth is piled up and for the rest there is a bottomless depth of poverty How can we remove these vast inequalities in society ? There is only one natural way for every one to get the necessaries of life, and that is for every one to shake off laziness and work hard Most of our misery arises from laziness If all were to resolve to work with their bodies, this misers will be no more

But what do we see in society today ? Oh one side, men grown rusty and useless, the limbs and senses of the rich are eaten up with rust because they are never used, On the other side are bodies worn rhin by unremitting toil But the tendency in society is for everybody to try and escape from bodily labour Even those who work hard do so without cheer They do so because there is no help for it Those whose are educated and intelligent make all sorts of excusses for avoiding labour Some say, "Why waste time in bodily labour ?" But no one asks, "Why waste time sleeping and eating ?" When we are hungry we eat When we are sleepy we sleep But when the question of bodily labour arises, we ask, "Why waste our time ? Why give so much trouble

to the body ? We are doing enough work, are we not, with our minds ?" My dear Sir, you talk of working with the mind ? Then, why not eat with the mind and sleep with the mind ? Why not be content with "mental" sleep and "mental" food ?

Thus there are two classes of men in society—those who work day and night and kill themselves, and those who do not lift a little finger A friend of mine one said to me, "Some are heads and some are trunks On the one hand, we have headless bodies, and on the other, bodiless heads The trunks merely labour, while the heads merely think Society has come to consist of Rahus and Ketus, who never meet " But if in reality they were separate heads and trunks, it would not matter For then some mutual arrangement could be made, as in the story of the blind man and the lame man The lame could lead the blind and the blind carry the lame But the heads and the trunks do not really form different groups Everybody has both a head and a trunk This combination of head and trunk is found everywhere What then shall we do ? Every one must shake off laziness

And to shake off laziness one must perform bodily labour, this is the only way to conquer laziness If we fail to do this, we cannot but receive due punishment from Nature We have to endure it in the form of sickness and other miseries Since we have the body, we must use it for labour The time spent on such labour is not wasted It does yield results, We have sound health, our minds become bright and keen and pure In the ideas of many thinkers we see reflected their colics and headaches If these thinkers would work under the sun, in the open air, in the presence of Nature, their ideas would be strong and bright Experience shows that just as the mind is influence by bodily sickness, so it is by bodily health Instead of contracting tuberculosis and then going to Bhuwali and other health resorts in the mountains in search of sunlight and pure air, why not dig with a spade in the open, or water the garden, or hew wood with an axe, and keep healthy ?

(77) Another Cure for Tamas

The first thing is to conquer laziness, the second is to conquer sleep Sleep is in reality something holy. The slumber of the

saints who fall asleep, who work till they tire themselves out, is in itself a kind of *yoga.* Such deep and peaceful sleep comes only to the fortunate Sleep must be deep and peaceful and undisturbed The value of sleep does not consist in its duration Sleep does not depend on the length of the bed or the period during which the person lay on it The deeper the well, the sweeter and purer its water So too, though one may aleep for a short while, if it is deep, it does good It is better to study with concentration for half an hour than to look at a book for three hours with a wandering mind Sleep too is like that It cannot be said that long sleep is always beneficial The sick man lies on his bed all the twenty-four hours of the day Though he clings to the bed, sleep does not approach him Only deep dreamless sleep is true sleep. Whatever the tortures of Yama after-death may be, the tortures of one who cannot sleep and is troubled by dreams are certainly indescribable In the *Veda,* the *rishi* in his fear prays,

"paraa duhsvapnyam suva."

"I do not want, I do not want this terrible sleep" Sleep is meant to give rest, but if even in sleep all kinds of dreams and cares trouble us, where are we to find rest ?

How then are we to get deep, undisturbed sleep ? The means to shake off laziness will serve here too We should give ceaseless work to the body Then the moment we get into bed, we shall sleep like a corpse Indeed sleep is a brief death To attain this beautiful death we should made due preparation by day The body must be throughly tired out by toil The English poet Shakespeare says, "Uneasv lies the head that wears a crown" One reason for it is that a king does not work with his body He who drowses by day will have to keep vigil at night Not to use the mind and body by day, what is this but drowsing ? Later, when it is time for sleep, the mind is troubled by thoughts, and the body misses the pleasure of real sleep Then he sleeps late If this life which should be used for attaining the highest ends is consumed by sleep, when and how can we ever reach those ends ? If half of our life is spent in sleep, what good then do we get out of life ?

When much time is consumed in sleep, the third defect of

tamas arises, namely, negligence and error The mind of the drowsy man cannot be strong or vigilant From this comes inattention Too much sleep leads to laziness and laziness to forgetfulness Forgetfulness is an enemy of the spirit Even in worldly affairs, forgetfulness causes nothing but harm But in our society, forgetfulness is regarded as quite natural No one thinks it is a great fault We make an appointment with somebody, and we don't go on time When asked, we say ' Good Lord, I forgot !" Both the speaker and the hearer are satisfied with this explanation It looks as though people think there is no remedy for forgetfulness But this forgetfulness does harm in practical as well as in spiritual matters It is in truth a grave sickness The canker consumes the mind and our life becomes hollow

The laziness of the mind is the cause of forgetfulness If the mind is alert, it cannot become forgetful The recumbent mind cannot save itself from the disease of forgetfulness Hence the Lord Buddha says,

"pamaado macchuno padam "

Negligence, forgetfulness, is death itself To get rid of this forgetfulness, we should conquer laziness and sloth Work with your body Be always alert Let every action proceed from deep thought Nothing should ever be done without thinking Think before you act and think also after you act Before and after action everywhere, the Lord in the form of thought should stand beside us If we acquire this habit, the disease of inattention will leave us All our time should thus be regulated in the right way If we keep an account of every moment, laziness cannot break into our life It is in this way that we should try to conquer *tamas*

(78) The Cure for Rajas—Living within the Limits of Svadharma

After dealing with *tamas*, we should come to grips with *rajas*. *Rajas* too is a terrible foe This is only another aspect of *tamas*, it would be true to say that both these words stand for the same thing After long sleep the body is rest-less, and after much movement it longs to stretch itself on the bed From *tamas* proceeds *rajas*, and from *rajas*, *tamas* Where one is present, you

may take it that the other will be found too Like bread in the oven with the flames below and the embers above, man is caught between *rajas* and *tamas* *Rajas* says, "Come here, I shall toss you towards *tamas*" and *tamas* says, "Come here, I shall throw you to *rajas*" Thus *rajas* and *tamas* help each other to ruin man Just as the football is destined to get kicked about on all sides, man's life is spent in receiving the kicks of *rajas* and *tamas*

The chief mark of *rajas* is the desire to do all sorts of things, an overweening ambition to do superhuman deeds Through *rajas* we conceive a limitless desire for action, a consuming greed Then we become unable to control the eagerness of our instincts and passions We wish to remove the mountain here and fill up the take there We are impelled to drain the water from the sea and to submerge the deserts of the Sahara We think of digging a Suez Canal or Panama Canal We are never at peace unless we are breaking and mending This is just like a child cutting up a piece of paper and making it into something else Mixing this with that, drowning one thing in another, making something fly, changing one thing into another—these are the endless games played by *rajas* "The bird flies in the air Why should I not fly too ? The fish lives in the water Why should I not make a submarine and live in water too ?"—thus, having got a human body, we find satisfaction in competing with birds and fish Man wants to migrate to other bodies and experience their wonders Someone says, "Come, let us go to Mars and see how people live there." The mind wanders all the time, as if innumerable desires, like so many demons, possessed it We cannot bear to see things being where they are We need some commotion, some excitement We think, "When with all my greatness, I am here, how could creation remain what it has always been ?" We behave like a wrestler who, through excess of energy, dashes against a wall and kicks against a tree Such excitment springs from *rajas* Under its influence man burrows deep into the earth, brings out from its bowels a few stones and calls them rubies and diamonds Possessed by the same agitation, he dives into the sea and, bringing up the rubbish from the depths, calls it a pearl But because it has no hole he pierces one through it Now, where is it to be worn ? So he gets the goldsmith to pierce his nose and ears for him Why does man fuss about in this fashion ? All this is due to the power of *rajas*,

Another effect of *rajas* is absence of steadiness *Rajas* desires immediate results When a slight obstruction is met with, the man gives up the path he has chosen and takes to another The man of *rajas* is ever busy taking up and abandoning things He changes his mind every day And in the end he finds himself empty-handed

raajasam chalam adhruvam

All the acts of the man of *rajas* are restless and uncertain He is like the child who plants a seed and, a little later, digs it up again to see if it has sprouted He expects results then and there He has neither confidence nor equanimity He does not know how to plant his feet firmly He does some work here, he gets some fame there, then he goes off to a third place which is neither here nor there Today a reception in Madras, tomorrow in Calcutta, and the day after in Bombay or Nagpur His ambition is to get civic addresses from every municipality in the land He sees glory every-where But staying in a place and doing some steady work, that is not his way The state of the *rajasik* man is thus really terrible

Under the influence of *rajas*, man indulges in all sorts of activities For him, there is nothing like *svadharma* The true pursuit of *svadharma* means the giving up of other varied activities The *karma-yoga* of the *Gita* is the *Rama--bana*, the arrow of Rama, for the destruction of *rajas* Everying about *rajas* is restless, unsteady If the rain falling on a mountain-top runs in all directions, if disappears, leaving no trace behind, the water is scattered and wasted But when the same water flows in one direction it becomes a river A power springs from it It brings blessings to the land So too, if a man does not scatter his energies in all sorts of efforts, but collects them and applies them in orderly fashion to a single task, only then can some good action take shape through his hands Hence there is great value in *svadharma*

We should think constantly of our *svadharma* and devote all our energies to it, we should have no thought for anything else This is the touchstone of *svadharma* *Karma-yoga* is not action which is great or weighty The *karma-yoga* of the *Gita* is something quite different Its distinctive virtue consists in

progressively acquiring *chittasuddhi*, inner purity, through performing, without any thought of fruit, the *svadharma* that comes to one naturally and inescapably Endless activities go on all the time throughout creation But *karma-yoga* means performing all actions with a special mental attitude To sow seed in a field and to scatter a handful of grain somewhere—these are entirely distinct actions The difference between them is great, we know how much we gain by sowing the seed and what we lose by throwing it away The *karma* that the *Gita* teaches is like the sowing of seed There is an unlimited power in carrying out one's duty, one's *svadharma*. Here, no effort can be too great Here, there is no excuse of running around

(79) How to Determine One's Svadharma

"How then, is *svadharma* to be determined ?" If some-one asks this, the easy answer would be, "It comes naturally, of itself" It is born into the world with us The very idea of going in search of it is strange When a man is born, his *svadharma* too is born with him As a child has no need to go in search of his mother, no one need go in search of *svadharma* It is ours, right from the beginning The world was there before we were born it will be there when we are no more The mighty stream flowed before we were born into it and it will flow after we are gone The service of the parents to whom I was born, the service of the neighbours amongst whom I find myself, these duties come to me naturally Then, my other obligations are matters of everyday experience I feel hungry, I feel thirsty So, to give food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty becomes my duty by nature Hence, it is never necessary to go in search of *svadharma*, of some form of service or compassion Wherever there is a search for *svadharma*, one may be certain that some *paradharma* or *adharma* is going on, that some one else's duty or some wrong action is being performed

The servant need not go in search of service, it comes to him unsought But one thing he should remember, that is that everything that comes to him without an effort on his part is not necessarily right A farmer comes to me at night and says, "Come, let us shift that bund a few feet away That will make my field larger There is no one there now We can do it

unnoticed " Although this task is assigned to me by my neighbour and comes of its own accord, it is not to be regarded as my duty, for it harbours *asatya*, falsehood.

The reason why I like the system of the four *varnas* is that both naturalness and *dharma* are found in it If you give up *svadharma* nothing will be gained Only those who happen to be my parents will be my parents I may say that I do not like them, but then, what can be done about it ? The parent's calling is naturally followed by the son It is the distinguishing feature of the *varna* system that the trade pursued by one's ancestors—if it is not opposed to morality -should be continued and developed This system has now fallen into decay Today it has become very difficult to uphold it But it would be an excellent thing if only we could reform and revive it Today the first 25 or 30 years of a man's life are spent in learning a new job, a new trade After learning it the man goes in search of a place to serve in, to work in Thus, between what he learns in the first 25 years and his actual life there is no connection They say that he is preparing for his later life This amounts to saying that while he is learning he is not alive Apparently, life is to come later ! One is to learn everything first and begin to live afterwards, as if living and learning are two entirely different things ! But if this is not related to life, should we not call it death ? While the average Indian's expectation of life is 23 years, here we are, spending 25 years in just preparing for living, In this way a lifetime is spent in learning a trade Then the actual practice of the trade begins In the result, the most energetic and enthusiastic years of our life are wasted The energy and enthusiasm which should be used in the service of mankind and enrichment of life run to waste Life is not mere play But it makes one sad to think that the first and most valuable part of life is spent in searching for a means of livelihood It is for this reason that Hinduism has discovered for us the system of *varna*

Let us leave aside the system of the four *varnas* In every country, even where this system does not obtain, every one has his own *svadhrma* All of us are born into the stream, bringing with us our own special circumstances, the duty called *svadharma* comes into being naturally We should not, therefore, adopt distant duties -it is wrong even to call them duties—however noble they may appear Often, it is distance that lends enchantment to the

view Man is drawn by distant objects Thick mist may surround a man where he stands But his eyes do not see it He points to a distant spot and says, "Look, there is thick mist there" Though there is mist everywhere, we do not see the mist just about us Distance has an attraction for man What is by his side lies neglected in a corner and he has dreams of what is far away But this is a delusion and it must be abandoned Though the *svadharma* that is mine is commonplace, incomplete and uninteresting, yet because it is mine, it is the best for me, it is the most beautiful to me. When a man is drowning in the sea, it is only the log floating near him, however, rough and gnarled, that will save him Does it matter that it is not well-shaped, smooth and polished ? In the carpenter's shed there may be any number of beautiful, well-wrought pieces of wood But they are in the workshop, while he is struggling for life in the sea This rough, unshapely log alone can save him He must catch hold of it

In the same way, though the duty that falls to me may appear unimportant, it alone serves my purpose It becomes me to be absorbed in it In it I find my growth and development If I wander in search of other service, I shall miss both the old service and the new Man thus, loses the inclination to serve Therefore, he should remain absorbed in the duty which is *svadharma*

When we are absorbed in *svadharma*, *rajas* dries up, for then our mind is one-pointed Since it does not swerve from *svadharma*, the power of *rajas*, of distraction, slackens When the river runs deep and still, however, much its water rises, it is contained within the banks So, too, the river of *svadharma* can hold all man's strength and power and energy No matter how much energy we put into *svadharma*, it can never be the much If we spend all our energy in *svadharma*, that will be the end of the play of *rajas*, our unsteadiness will be stamped out This is the way of conquering *rajas*

(80) Sattva and How to Deal with it

What now remains is *sattva* We should approach this matter with special care How to distinguish the Self from *sattva* ? This is a matter for very subtle analysis We should not altogether destroy *sattva* While *rajas* and *tamas* must be utterly destroyed, the case of *sattva* is somewhat different When a big crowd is to be dispersed, the police are ordered to shoot below the knees The

idea is that people are not to be killed, but wounded. In the same way, *sattva* should be wounded, not killed When *rajas* and *tamas* have disappeared, what remains is pure *sattva* So long as we have a body, we have to take our stand on something. Then how long can we stand aloof from the *sattva* which remains after the disappearance of *rajas* and *tamas* ?

When we begin to identify ourselves with *sattva*, it drags down the Self from its nature of pure being If the light of the lantern is to spread in all its brightness, the carbon deposit inside that too should be washed In the same way, the smoke of *tamas* surrounding the light of the Self should be wiped off And then the dust of *rajas* should also be removed At last the transparent glass of *sattva* will remain Removing *sattva*—does it mean breaking the glass ? No, for the lantern would become useless if the glass is broken The glass is needed to spread the light Therefore, we should not break this clean bright glass, but to save our eyes from the glare, we may insert a piece of paper in front of it. The purpose of this is only to save the eyes from glare To achieve victory over *sattva* means to remove our identification with it, our attachment to it We have to make use of *sattva*, but it should be done in a disciplined, intelligent manner We should make *sattva* free of *ahamkara*, of egoism

How then are we to overcome the egoism, the pride, of *sattva* ? There is a way for this And that is to make *sattva* firm and steadfast within us By being constant in it, we shall cease to be proud of it We should be constantly doing *sattvik* actions We should make this part of our nature We should make *sattva* not a guest who comes and goes but a member of the household We get proud of things that we do once in a way We sleep daily, but we do not discuss it with others If a patient had no sleep at all for a fortnight and then slept for a while, he tells everybody "I had some sleep yesterday " It seems to him quite an event A better example in our breathing We breaths all the twenty-four hours of the day, but we do not make much of it No one boasts of being a breathing animal If a piece of straw thrown into the Ganga at Haridwar floats down 1500 miles and reaches Calcutta, does it feel proud of its achievement ? It was only natural that it should float down with the current If, however, one swims ten yards against the current, one considers oneself a hero The truth is that, when an action is natural, we do not feel proud of it

When some good action gets done through our hands, we are inclined to take the credit for it and feel proud Why ? Because it was not done naturally When a good action gets done through a child's hands, the mother pats it on the back Otherwise, the child's back would ordinarily know only the touch of the mother's cane When in the thick darkness of the night there are a few glow-worms, look how proudly they show themselves off ! They do not display all their brightness at once The glow-worm twinkles and stops and twinkles again, as if it were playing hide and seek with light But if its light were steady, it would not be so proud Because it is constant, one notices nothing special in it If, in the same way, *sattva* shines constantly in all our actions, it would become our nature Not only is the lion not proud of its strength, it is not even conscious of it So too, *sattvik* conduct must be so natural and spontaneous with us that we do not even think of it It is natural for the sun to give light The sun takes no pride in it If anybody sets out to present it with a testimonial, it would say, "What is the special thing that I have done ? I do no more than give light My life consists in giving light If I didn't do that, I would die What else could I do ?" The state of the *sattvik* man should become like this *Sattva* should pervade every pore of his being When *sattva* becomes to much our nature, we would cease to be proud of it This is one way to make *sattva* harmless, to achieve victory over it

Another way is to give up even the attachment to *sattva* Egoism and attachment are two distinct things But the difference between them is rather fine One can understand is more readily by means of an illustration Even when the egoism, the pride in *sattva*, disappears, the attachment to it persists Take breathing, once more, as an example Though we are not proud of our breathing, we still have a great desire to breathe It is impossible to hold the breath even for five minutes Though the nose is not proud of breathing, it goes on taking in air There is an amusing story about Socrates His nose was flat and people used to laugh at it But the witty philosopher said, "Mine is the most beautiful of noses These nostrils are wide and take in a lot of air and, therefore, they are the best " It means that, though the nose is not proud of breathing, it desires to breathe In the same way we develop an attachment to *sattva-guna* Take, for example, kindness to all creatures Though this is a useful quality, we

should be able to keep away even from this attachment We should have kindness, but not attachment to kindness

It is through this *sattva-guna* that saints show the way clearly to mankind Because of their compassion, their bodies become the common possession of all As flies cover the lump of jaggery, all the world wraps the saint in affection There is so much love in the heart of the saint that the whole world begins to love him The saint gives up attachment to his body, and therefore, the whole world becomes attached to it and cares for it But even from this attachment the saint must free himself The world's love, this great fruit,—even from this he should keep the separate He should never feel that he is special or unique In this way, *sattva-guna* should be digested and disposed of in the body

Conquer egoism first, and then attachment Egoism is conquered by constancy in *sattva*, attachment is conquered by giving up desire for results, and dedicating to the Lord even the fruit attained through *sattva-guna* When *sattva* becomes steady in our lives, the fruit will come before us, sometimes as success, sometimes as fame But even this fruit we should regard as something trivial, Not even one of its fruits does dot mango tree eat However , good, however, sweet, however juicy the mango, not eating it is sweeter than eating it Renunciation is sweeter than enjoyment Dharmaraja in the end cast away the joys of *svarga*, heaven, which he had earned by a lifetime's practice of virtue With this he crowned his life of sacrifice He had the right to taste the sweetness of the fruit, but if he had tasted it, it would have come to an end *Kshiine punye martyalokam visanti*—"When the merits earned are exhausted, they re-enter the world of mortality" He is caught in this wheel again How great was this sacrifice of Dharmaraja ! It stands for ever before my eyes Thus by constant practice of *sattva* we should achieve victory over its egoism Standing aloof, and dedicating all fruits to the Lord, we should free ourselves, from attachment to *sattva* Only then can we say that we have achieved victory over *sattva-guna*

(81) The Final Stage—Self-Realisation and Refuge in Bhakti

Now to the last matter Though we become full of *sattva*, though we have vanquished egoism, though we have given up all attachment to fruit, so long as this body lasts we shall be subject

now and again to the assaults of *rajas* and *tamas* We might for a while think that we have overcome these *gunas*, but they come back again and again and exert their power Therefore, we should be ever vigilant As the waters of the sea rush in and make inroads into the land, the flood of *rajas* and *tamas* enters our minds and eats into them There should not, therefore, be the smallest chink through which they can enter We should keep constant watch No matter what care and skill we exercise, there is danger, so long as we have not attained Self-realisation, the vision of the Self Therefore, we should endeavour, no matter by what means to attain Self-realisation

Self-realisation will not come from mere vigilance How then will it come ? Will it come through exercises ? No, There is only one way, and that way is to be devoted to the Lord, to yearn for Him with all one's heart We may overcome *rajas* and *tamas*, we may become steadfast in *sattva* and give up attachment to its fruit, but this is not enough The task is not complete till Self-realisation is attained In the end, therefore, the grace of the Lord is essential And through real devotion of the heart, we should quality for the grace of the Lord I know no other means for this At the end of this Chapter, Arjuna puts the same question, and the Lord answers, "With mind absolutely one-pointed and without desiring the fruit, be devoted to Me and serve Me He who serves Me thus crosses *maya*, illusion, and reaches the other shore It is not easy by any other means to cross this dense *maya* " This is *bhakti's* easy method And this is the only way

XV

THE YOGA OF COMPLETENESS—SEEING THE LORD EVERYWHERE

(82) Bhakti is not Different from the Way of Effort

In one sense we have reached the other share of the *Gita* today In the Fifteenth Section all the ideas of the *Gita* find their fulfilment The Sixteenth and he Seventeenth Sections are in the nature of supplements, and the Eighteenth Section serves as the conclusion Hence, the Lord at the end of this Section calls it *sastra*, science He says,

"iti guhyatamam saastram idamuktam mayaa anagha "
"Thus, O flawless one, have I taught you this science, the greatest of secrets "

And he says this not because it is the concluding Section but because in it the science and the philosophy of life that have been taught till now find completion In this Section, *paramartha*, the supreme truth, is revealed The whole essence of the *Vedas* is here The function of the *Vedas* is to awaken in man the awareness of *paramartha* Because this is done in this Section, it has come to be honoured as "*vedasara*," the essence of the *Veda*

We saw in the Thirteenth Section the need for separating the Self from the body In the Fourteeeth we analysed the efforts necessary for this Through self-control we should give up *rajas* and *tamas*, we should develop *sattva* and at the same time overcome attachment to it, renounce the fruit of it In the end, it is said that, in order to achieve complete success, Self-realisation is essential, but without *bhakti* Self-realisation is unattainable

The way of *bhakti*, however, is not different from the way of effort To show this, at the very beginning of the Fifteenth Section, the world is compared to a mighty tree This tree has great big branches nourished by the three *gunas* It is said right at the beginning that this tree is to be cut down with the axe of desirelessness and detachment It is clear that the discipline described in the previous Section is gone over again in the beginning of this By eliminating *rajas* and *tamas*, and nourishing *sattva*, we should develop ourselves One is destructive work, the other constructive Both together from a single path Removing weeds and sowing seed are two parts of the same job Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Vibhishana are three brothers in the *Ramayana* Kumbhakarna is *tamas* Ravana is *rajas*, Vibhishana is *sattva* The *Ramayana* of these three is built into our body And in this *Ramayana* too, Ravana and Kumbhakarna are destined to destruction What remains is the Vibhishana-principle And if it takes refuge in the feet of the Lord, it can give you strength and lead you to the goal And therefore, we should make it our own This we have understood in the Fourteenth Section But it is repeated in the beginning of the Fifteenth Section. By the axe of non-attachment, cut off the world of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* Control *rajas* and *tamas* Develop *sattva* and become pure Conquer even

the attachment to *sattva* and remain free The *Gita* is here placing before us the ideal of the lotus flower In India the most noble things of life are compared to the lotus The lotus is the symbol of our culture The lotus, though pure and holy, is untouched even by these qualities Purity and non-attachment are its two-fold power We compare every part of the Lord's body with the lotus We speak of His lotus-eyes, lotus-feet, lotus-hand, lotus-face, lotus-navel, lotus-heart and lotus-head, and by this comparison we impress on our hearts the truth that everywhere non-attachment is found only in association with beauty and holiness

This Section is intended to complete the discipline mentioned in the previous Section When in our efforts *bhakti* and awareness of the Self are combined, they become complete *Bhakti* is only a part of the way of effort Both Self-realisation and *bhakti* are two halves of the same process The *rishi* says in the *Vedas*

> "yo jaagaara tam richah kaamayante
> yo jaagaara tamu saamaani yanti "

"The *Vedas* love him who is awake, they come of themselves to see him" In other words, to him who is awake comes *Vedanarayana*, the Lord in the form of the *Vedas*, *jnana* comes to him, *bhakti* comes to him *Jnana* and *bhakti* are not different from the way of effort It is shown in this Section that these two principles make effort sweet Therefore let us listen with one-pointed mind to this character of *bhakti* and *jnana*

(83) Through Bhakti Effort Becomes Easy

I cannot cut up life into bits I cannot separate *karma*, *jnana* and *bhakti*, nor are they separate For example, look at the cooking in this jail A few of us do the work of preparing food for the six or seven hundred people here If some of these cooks do not know their job, they would spoil the food The *chapatis* would be underdone or burnt black But let us take it that they have good knowledge of the art of cooking Even so, if there is no love, no *bhakti*, in their hearts, if they do not feel, "These *chapatis* are meant for my brothers, for Narayana They must be well cooked This is the service of the Lord," if they do not feel this, they are unfit for the task in spite of all their knowledge of cooking Cooking requires not only knowledge, but love too Unless their is the *rasa* of *bhakti* in the heart, there can be no *rasa*, no taste, in

the food That is why a mother's cooking is particularly tasty For who else would do this with so much love and care ? And *tapasya*, self-sacrificing austerity, is also necessary for it How can this work be done without enduring heat and accepting hardship ? From this we conclude that, for success in any action, love, knowledge and labour, all three are necessary All the activities of life stand on these three If one of the legs of a tripod is broken, it cannot stand, all three legs are needed The every name conveys the structure Such too is the condition of life *Janana, bhakti, karma*, knowledge, love and constant effort, are the three legs on which life stands On these three pillars we should construct our Dvaraka, the city of nine gates These three legs together make up one thing. The image of the tripod fits exactly Even if you logically distinguish between *bhakti, jnana* and *karma*, you cannot divide them in experience The three together make up one great entity

But it does not follow that there is no special quality in *bhakti* When the principle of *bhakti* enters into any action, it is only then that it appears easy "To appears easy" does not mean that there will be no difficulty It only means that the difficulty will seem not a difficulty but on the contrary, a pleasure Thorns appear as flowers What is meant by saying that the way of *bhakti* is easy ? It means that, as a result of the attitude of *bhakti*, the burden of action is not felt The hardship of action disappears No matter how much work we do, we feel as if we have done no work Jesus Christ says, "Moreover, when ye fast be not, as the hypocrities, of a and countenance, for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast Verily I say unto you, they have their reward But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast " The idea is, we should be so filled with *bhakti*, so absorbed in it, that we do not feel the hardship

Do we not say that a patriot walked smiling to the gallows ? Sudhanva smiled in the cauldron of boiling oil, while his lips uttered the names of Krishna, Vishnu, Hari, Govinda It only means that, because of the power of *bhakti*, one does not feel even the most terrible pain It is not difficult to push a boat floating in the water, but how hard to drag the same boat on land, on rocks ? If there is water under the boat, we can cross over to the other shore without effort In the same way, if our

life's boat floats on the waters of *bhakti*, we can sail gaily in it But if life is dry and the way dusty, stony, full of pitfalls, it would be indeed hard to drag the boat along The principle of *bhakti*, like water, makes easy the voyage of our life

Bhakti makes the path easy, but without Self-knowledge there is no hope of transcending the three *gunas* Then, what is the means to Self-knowledge ? It is to make *sattva* one's own by constancy in it and to try through *bhakti* to overcome the egoism of *sattva* and attachment to it If we adopt this means and strive constantly, unremittingly, then the vision of the Self will one day come to us Till then we cannot come to the end of our efforts This is a matter concerning the highest goal of our life Attaining the vision of the Self is not mere play We cannot expect to find it by the wayside We should maintain a constant stream of efforts The condition of spiritual life is the resolve, "I shall never give the slightest room to despair I shall never—not even for a moment—sit still in despondency " There is no other means of spiritual progress The seeker sometimes asks in weariness,

> "For your sake I have practised *tapas* and self-control Tell me what more I should do, and how much longer I should strive "

But this question is besides the point We should practise *tapas* and self-control until they become our very nature To ask, "How long, till when, am I to perform *sadhana* ?"—such language is improper in *bhakti* *Bhakti* never permits diffidence and despair to arise There would be no sinking of the heart in it Noble ideas which can bring progressive joy and enthusiasm to *bhakti* are revealed in this Section

(84) The Triad of Seva Master, Servant, Means of Service

The universe presents countless objects to our eyes We can divide them into three classes As the *bhakta* wakes up in the morning, only three objects appear before him First his mind goes to the Lord Then he makes preparations for His worship "I am the servant, the devotee, He is my Lord, the master whom I serve"—these two are ever present Now what remains is the rest of creation, which is the means for the worship The whole

of creation is intended to provide the flowers, the fragrance, the incense and the lights There are only three things, the servant devotee, the Lord to be served, and the creation which is the means for this service It is this lesson that is taught in this Section But when one worships some image, all the objects of creation do not seem to him means of worship He goes and fetches a few flowers from the garden, gets hold of a couple of incense sticks and prepares some food-offerings He wishes to choose a few objects But there is no need for such selection, according to the comprehensive teaching of the Fifteenth Section All the means of *tapas* all the means of *karma*, are means of service to the Lord Some of them we would call flowers, some food-offerings In this way, we should make all actions means of worshipping the Lord It is thus we should look at it There are only these three things in the world To the way of non-attached effort which the *Gita* tries to impress upon our hearts, it gives a form full of *bhakti* Thus, it takes away from action the character of action and renders it easy

When in an *ashram* some one has to do a lot of work, it never occurs to him to complain, "Why should I alone do so much work ?" There is a beauty in this If the worshipper gets four hours instead of the usual two for his worship, would he complain "Good Lord, I had to worship for four hours today !"? On the contrary, he would rejoice all the more One has this experience everywhere in life Life should be consecrated to service He is *Purushottama*, the Supreme Person, who receives, our service and I, ever absorbed in His service, am *aksharapurusha* an imperishable person "*Aksharapurusha*" means the eternal servant who knows no weariness and serves from the beginning of creation He is like Hanuman who is ever standing before Rama with folded hands He is an absolute stranger to laziness Like Hanuman he stands, living for ever, absorbed in service

Such a lifelong servant is called *aksharapurusha*, the unchanging, the immortal Person The Supreme Self lives, and I, His servant, I too live for ever If the Master exist, then I too exist Let us see who gets tried first, He by accepting or I by offering, service If He has taken ten *avatars*, I too have had ten *avatars* When He is Rama, I am Hanuman When He is Krishna, I am Uddhava Every time He is born, I am born too Let this happy rivalry go on ! The soul serves the Lord in this way, *yuga* after

yuga, aeon after aeon, and is never destroyed This is the *aksharapurusha* He, the Supreme Person, is the Master, I am His servant, His slave This *bhavana,* this attitude, should be kept steady and unchanging in the heart This creation changes every moment and shines in manifold forms, we should make it the means of worship, the instrument of service Every act we perform is worship of the Lord

He that is served, the Supreme Self, is *purushottama,* he that serves the soul is the imperishable person, but the means of service, ceration, is *kshara,* periseable There is deep significance in its being perishable This is not a fault in creation, it is its glory Because of this, creation is ever new Yesterday's flowers will not do for today, they are fit only to be cast away Creation is perishable, it is a good thing that it is so This is the glory of service Every day fresh flowers are available for worship In the same way, I will take on new bodies and render service to the Lord Every day I shall give new forms to the medium of worship It is because it is transient that it is beautiful Today's moon is not the same as yesterday's Every day it acquires a new grace What joy it is to behold the waxing moon two days old ! How it shines upon the forehead of Lord Siva! The beauty of the eighth-day moon is quite different Then, only a few choice pearls are seen in the sky During Full Moon, because of the brightness, not a star is to be seen Then we see in the moon the face of the Lord And majestic is the beauty of the New Moon night How serene and undisturbed its calm ! The sovereign brightness of the moon withdrawn, countless stars, small and large, blossom out in perfect freedom The freedom of *amavasya,* the New Moon night, has full play The moon, with its proud display of brightness, is not there It has become one with the sun which gives it light It has joined the Lord Then it seems to show how the soul can surrender itself without being the cause of any sorrow to the world The moon's form is transient, mutable, but it gives joy through all its many forms

It is its mutability that makes ceration immortal The form of creation flows like a gurgling stream If the Ganga does not keep flowing, it would become a stagnant pool The water flows in an unbroken stream But it is for ever changing One drop replaces another And so the water lives One finds joy in an object because it is new In summer, we worship the Lord with flowers. In

the rainy season, we offer the tender green *dub* grass In autumn, it is the beautiful lotus With the flowers and the fruits that are in season, the Lord is worshipped That is why worship is bright and ever fresh One never gets tired of it If we write out the letter 'A' for a child and tell him to write again and again over it thickening the lines, it simply bores him He cannot understand why the lines should be made thick He blunts the point of the pencil and does it as quickly as possible But later he learns new letters and new combinations of letters He begins to read many kinds of books He experiences the masterpices of literature Then he has boundless joy It is the same with worship Because the instruments are ever new, the enthusiasm for worship grows The habit of service develops

Because of the transitoriness of creation we have fresh flowers every day The cremation ground is near the village, that is why the village looks beautiful Old people go, and new children are being born Creation is renewed every day If we abolish the cremation ground out there, it would come in and occupy the house You would get tired of seeing the same people day after day It is hot in summer, the earth is parched But do not be afraid All this will change This burning heat is necessary for us to enjoy the pleasures of the rainy season If the earth were not hot and dry, the first shower would make it slushy And neither grass nor grain would grow on it Once I was wandering about on a hot summer day My head was hot I was filled with joy A friend said to me, "You will get sun stroke " I said, "The earth below is burning Let this clay doll too burn a little " What joy to have a cold shower on a burning head! But he who is not scorched in the summer sun will bury his head in his books even when it rains He will remain in his room, in his grave He would not dance with joy under this vast sacred shower out in the open But our *maharshi* Manu was a great enjoyer and lover of Nature He says in his *Smrti*, "When it rains, declare a holiday " When it is raining without who would sit within and chant Vedic verses again and again ? When it rains, we should sing and dance. We should become one with Nature Then, earth and heaven meet and mingle This beautiful sight fills us with joy It is as if creation itself is teaching us

The truth is that the mutability and transience of creation means freshness in the medium of worship Thus, we have creation

forever presenting us with an ever-new progeny of means, the immortal servant, standing ever reday to serve with girt loins, and the Supreme Self to be served Now let the game go on The Lord Supreme gives me means which are endlessly new and wonderful and He takes from me service which springs from love, Giving me all sorts of things, He lets me play He usess me in all sorts of ways If only we can develop this attitude in life, what happiness would be ours!

(85) Egoless Service is Bhakti

The *Gita* wants every action of ours to be filled with *bhakti* It is good that we worship God for half an hour now and then Morning and evening, when the beautiful light of the sun spreads out its colours, it is an excellent idea to steady one's mind, to forget the world for a while and meditate on the Infinite We should not give up such good habits But the *Gita* is not satisfide with them All our actions from morning till night should become worship of the Lord Bathing, eating, or sweeping, we should think of the Lord While sweeping, we should have the *bhavana*, the attitude, that we are cleaning the courtyard of the Lord, the master of our life. All our action should thus become acts of worship Once this attitude becomes yours, observe what a vast difference it makes to your life How carefully we choose flowers for worship, how gently we carry them, so that they may not get bruised or crumpled or faded ! For fear that it might lose its freshness, we do not take the flower near our nose This same attitude, this *bhavana*, should enter in to all our daily actions In this very village of mine, my *Narayana*, my Lord, plays about in the form of this my neighbour Therefore, I shall keep this village clean and tidy The *Gita* wishes to give us this attitude Its great desire is to make all our action into worship of the Lord To a King of Scriptures like the *Gita*, a half-hour *puja* yields no satisfaction Its keen desire is that the whole of life should be filled with the Lord and be a form of worship

The *Gita* teachers the *purushottama yoga* and brings to perfection the life or *karma* He is *Purushottama*, the Lord, receiving service, I am His servant, and all this creation the instrument for His service If once we realise this relationship, what more do we need ? Tukaram says,

"Once the vision is attained, I shall serve
I shall ask for nothing more my Lord"

Then continuous service will proced Then there is no such thing as ' I " "I" and "mine" are swept away and then whatever remains is for the sake of the Lord Life is lived entirely for the good of others There is nothing else This is what the *Gita* teaches again and again. I shall remove from myself all sense of "I" and surrender my life to the Lord and fill it with *bhakti* The Lord to serve. I the servant and Creation the means Where is the talk of possession now ? Life has no care any more

(86) The Mark of Jnana—Seeing the Self in All Three

Till now we have seen that we should thus fill *karma* with *bhakti*, but there should be in it *jnana* too, else the *Gita* would not be satisfied This does not mean that these three are different things We distinguish them only in speech *Karma* means *bhakti* There is no need to bring *bhakti* from elsewhere and put it into *karma* It is the same with *jnana* How shall we find *jnana* ? The *Gita* says, "By seeing *purusha*, the Self. everywhere You are the servant the Self enternally serving He is the *Purushottama* the Self eternally served And this creation that bears endless new forms, that gives to us all kinds of means of service, that keeps ever flowing this too is *purusha*, the Self"

What is meant by this attitude ? Everywhere we should assume the attitude of pure, flawless service If your sandals squeak, give them some oil In them too is something of the Lord, so attend to them with care Apply oil also to the *charkha*, the instrument of service Listen, it calls for attention It says, "*neti, neti*, I won't spin" This *charkha*, this instrument of service, is also *purusha* Take good care of its belt, its sacred thread Regard all creation as filled with *chaitanya*, as alive and aware Don't set it down as inert The *charkha* that sings out, ' Om,"—is it inert ? It is an image of the Supreme On the Moon day of *sravan*, we shed our pride and offer worship to the ox This is a great matter Remembering this observance every day, let us look after our oxen and get appropriate work from them The *bhakti* that rises in your heart should not stop with that day The ox too is an image of the Lord The plough, and all these other implements of argiculture, keep them in good order All the tools of service are holy How broad is this vision ! Worship does not mean

offering flowers and consecrated rice, and sprinkling rose water To keep the vessels clean and polished like crystals, that is worship of the vessels To clean the lamp is to worship it To whet the scythe and make it ready for reaping is worship To lubricate the rusty hinge of the door, this is worship too We should use all things with this attitude We should keep all the materials of service clean and in good condition The truth is that I am the *aksharapurusha*, the imperishable Self, He is *Purushottama*, the Self Supreme, and this Creation, the means of service, this too, is *purusha*, the Supreme Being Once we have the vision of the play of *chaitanya*, of intelligence, everywhere, we can say that *jnana* too has entered our action

First we put *bhakti* into *karma*, devotion into action Now, we add *jnana* to it, we make the divine elixir which will transform life The *Gita* has in the end brought us to the way of service filled with *advaita*, the sense of oneness, and leaves us there Wherever we look in creation we see three *pnrushas* *Purushottama*, the one Supreme Person, has assumed these three forms In reality, the three together constitute one Person There is nothing but oneness Here the *Gita* has led us to the highest peak *Karma*, *bhakti*, *jnana* have all become one Man, God and Creation have all become one Between *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana* there is now no conflict In his *Amrtanubhava*, Jnanadev gives an example dear to Mahatashtra

> "Out of rock we chisel the Lord, His temple and His followers Why should not the acts of *bhakti* be like this too ?"

Out of the rock, we make the temple, and the throne and the image of God Out of the same rock, we make the devotee standing in front, and carve too the fruit he offers, One big rock assumes all these different forms Why should not the same thing happen with *bhakti* too ? Even in the relationship of Master and servant, why should there not be oneness ? This outward creation, these materials of worship, distinct though they be, why should they not become of the nature of the Self ? The three *purushas* are after all one To combine the streams of *jnana*, *karma* and *bhakti* into a mighty river of life—this is the perfect *purushottama-yoga*. The Master, the servant, and the

instruments of service—they are all one Now let us play the game of devotion and love

He, on whose heart is impressed this *purushottama-yoga,* he alone performs true *bhakti*

"sa sarvavid bhajati maam sarvabhaavena bhaarata "
"Knowing all and being all, he worships me, O Bharata "

Such a man, though he is a *jnani,* remains a pure *bhakta* Where there is knowledge, there is love too Knowing the Lord and loving Him are not two different things If we have the knowledge that the *karela* (the bitter gound) is bitter, then we have no love for it There may be one or two exceptions, but whenever bitterness is experienced, we feel disgust The moment we hear of sugar-candy, our tongue waters, love for it wells up But with the Lord, to know Him and to love Him are the same But can one compare the sweetness of the Lord's from with so common a thing as sugar-candy ? The moment we have the knowledge of the sweet Lord, the same instant love for Him springs in our heart The birth of knowledge and the birth of love are not two different events There is no point in the discussion whether there is room the *bhakti* in *advaita* Jnanadev says,

"Only know Vitthal
This is *bhakti,* this is *jnana* "

bhakti and *jnana* are two names of one thing

The work that gets done when the supreme *bhakti* pervades life is not different from *bhakti* and *jnana* *Karma, bhakti* and *jnana* together make a single beautiful form And from is will spring, naturally, wonderful service full of love, full of knowledge One loves one's mother, but this love should express itself in action Love is constantly dying expending itself, and coming out in the form of service The outer form of love is service Love adorns itself with innumerable act of service and comes our dancing Where there is love, knowledge comes and joins it When I am to serve a person, I should know what service would please him Or else, it would be disservice or wrong service Love must have knowledge of that which it would serve To spread through action the power of love, knowledge is needed

But at the root of this knowledge, there must be love Without it, knowldge would be useless An act performed through love is very different from an ordinary act. As the son comes home tired from the field, the mother looks at him with natural love and says, "You are tired, my child" Look how much power there is in this slight action Weave all the actions of your life with the warp and woof of *bhakti* and *jnana* This is what is called *purushottama-yoga*

(87) The Essence of All the Vedas in the Palm of My Hand

This is the essence of all the *Vedas* The *Vedas* are infinite But the distilled essence of the infinite *Vedas* is the *purushottama-yoga* Where are these *Vedas*? Their ways are strange Where is their essence? At the very beginning of this Section it is said, "He whose leaves the *Vedas* are" My brother, the *Vedas* fill every leaf of this tree The *Vedas* are not hidden in the *Samhitas* (collections of *mantras*) or in your books and treatises They pervade the whole universe Shakespeare speaks of

> " Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks
> Sermons in stones "

The idea is that the *Vedas* are neither in Sanskrit nor in the *Samhitas*, but in all Creation If you serve, they will appear before you We say, "*prabhaate karadarsanam*"— "looking at one's palm early in the morning" All the *Vedas* are in that palm and they say, "Serve" Consider whether your hands worked yesterday, whether they are fit to work again today and whether they carry the marks of service When the hands are worn out with service, the destiny that Brahma ordained for you becomes clear This is the meaning of "looking at one's palm in the morning"

People ask, "Where are the *Vedas*?" My brother, they are in your hands It is said Sankaracharya had knowledge of all the *Vedas* in his eighth year Then poor Sankara must have been a dull fellow He needed eight years! I am the *Vedas* living and awake All the generations that have gone before have found their fulfilment in me. I am the fruit of this long line From the seed of the *Vedas* came this fruit In my fruit are gathered the seed of endless *Vedas* The *Vedas* within me have increased

five-fold and fifty-fold The truth is, the essence of the *Vedas* is in our hands We have to build our lives on the foundations of service, love and knowledge This is what is meant by saying that the *Vedas* are in our hands The meaning that I see is the *Vedas*, not something, somewhere, outside The saints, who are the embodiment of service, declare, "It is we who know the meaning of the *Vedas*" The Lord says, "Me alone all the *Vedas* know I am the light of the *Vedas*, their essence, the *Purushottama*" If we can make this essence of the *Vedas*, the *purushottama-yoga*, our own, if we can make it part of our lives, what joy it would be! The *Gita* shows us how the *Vedas* themselves are revealed in the actions of such a man In this Section is present the whole essence of the *Gita* The whole of its teaching is revealed here All of us should labour day and night to inform our lives with it What else?

XVI

A SUPPLEMENT—THE CONFLICT BETWEEN DIVINE AND DEMONIC TENDENCIES

(88) The Dawn of Purushottama-Yoga Attainment of Divine Qualities

In the first five Sections of the *Gita*, we saw the whole scheme of life and the means of achieving life's purposes Then, from the Sixth to the Eleventh Sections we had a vision of *bhakti* In the Twelth Section we compared the *saguna* and *nirguna* forms and saw the qualities of the *bhakta* Throughout this Section we analysed thoroughly the two principles of *karma* and *bhakti* Then there remained the third principle of *jnana* and this we studied in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Sections We learnt how to separate the Self from the body, how to master the three *gunas* and in the end see God everywhere The Fifteenth Section gave us the complete science of life, which reaches perfection in *purushottama-yoga* After that, nothing remains

I cannot bear to see *karma jnana* and *bhakti* separated To some seekers established in *karma*, this is the only thing that appears worth while Others regard *bhakti* as an independent method and place all their emphasis on it Still others choose *jnana*, Life does not mean mere *karma* or mere *bhakti* or mere

jnana I do not like this "mere" philosophy And I do not accept the opposite view that would combine *karma bhakti* and *jnana* Nor do I like the utilitarian philosophy of a little of *bhakti* a little of *bhakti* a little of *jnana* and a little of *karma* The theory of successive stages—first *karma*, then *bhakti*, the *jnana*—this too I do not accept I wish to experience that that which is *karma* is *bhakti* and *jnana* too

The sweetness, the shape and the weight of a cake are not things apart When we put it into our mouth, we eat up its from absorb its weight and taste its sweetness The three are mingled together In every particle of the sweet cake is found its form, its weight and its sweetness It is not as if the shape alone is found in one particle, the mere weight in another, and the sweetness by itself in a third In the same way, the spirit should pervade every action of our life—every action should be full of love and full of knowledge Every part of life should be filled to overflowing with *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana* This is called *purushottama-yoga*

It is easy to say that the whole of life should be given over to the spirit but if we begin to think of what these words mean, we shall see that, in order to render absolutely flawless service, we have to act in the confident belief that our hearts are moved by pure *jnana* and *bhakti* Therefore, this ultimate state in which *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana* are inseparably one is called *purushottama-yoga* Here we reach the goal of life

Now, what is said in the Sixteenth Section ? Just as, before the sun rises, its light begins to spread, so too, before the *purushottama-yoga* full of *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana* rises in our lives, the dawn of good qualities shines forth The Sixteeath Section describes the light which is to shine in the perfect life It also describes the darkness with which it has to battle before it emerges As proof of the existence of something unseen, we wish to have some visible symbol How are we to know that service, love and knowledge have entered our life ? When we have worked hard in the fields, we harvest the grain, measure it and bring it home This Section indicates how in the same way we can assess our *sadhana*—what experiences we went through, what good qualities we acquired what good habits we formed, how far in reality our life was made up of service The aim of this Section is to enable us to measure how far the art of life has developed

and progressed. To this growing art of life, which waxes like the moon, the *Gita* gives the name of "*daivi sampat*" divine attainments. The opposite tendencies it calls "*asuri sampt*," demonic attainments. The Sixteenth Section describes the conflict between the divine and the demonic qualities.

(89) The Armies of Violence and Non-violence

Just as in the First Section the Kaurava army stood face to face with the Pandava army, so here, the divine army of good qualities is brought face to face with the demonic army of bad qualities. From very early times there is the tradition of represnting through symbols the struggle that rages between good and bad in the heart of man. In the *Vedas*, Indra against Vritra, in the *Puranas*, *devas* against *danavas* in the epic, Rama against Ravana, in the scriptures of the Parsis, Ahuramazda against Ahriman, among the Jews, Jehovah against Satan, in Islam, Allah against Iblis—such conflicts are found in all religious traditions. While in poetry concrete things are described metaphorically through subtle objects in religious works subtle inward movements are described by giving them clear concrete forms. In one, the gross is described through the subtle, and in the other, the subtle in terms of the gross. This is not to say that the battle described at the beginning of the *Gita* is merely imaginary, it may have been a historical event. But the poet here uses it to achieve his chosen purpose. Through the image of a battle he explains what a man should do when his mind is deluded by conflict of of duties. The Sixteenth Section describes the conflict between good and evil. The *Gita* uses the allegory of war.

Kurukshetra is both outside us and within us. When we observe it carefully, it is the battle raging within that we see assuming shape in the world without. He who seems to be my enemy is only the passion in my heart taking on a shape and standing, out there. Just as my image, handsome or ugly, appears in the mirror, it is the bad and good thoughts of our mind that appear without as our enemies and friends. As we see in dreams what we have seen while awake, so we see in the world without what is in our hearts. Between the battle within and the battle without, there is little difference. To speak the truth, the real battle is only within ourselves.

Within us there are good qualities on one side and bad ones

on the other And both armies are well arranged An army needs a commander The good qualities have their own commander named "*abhaya*," fearlessness Fearlessness has been given the first place in this Section This is not mere accident, but deliberate Without truth good qualities have no value, but then, for truth, fearlessness is essential In an atmosphere charged with fear, good qualities cannot grow, in fact thay become themselves bad qualities, and good efforts and tendencies get weakened Fearlessness is the commander of all good qualities, but the army has to be watched front and rear, and on both sides The direct attack will of course be in front, but one may also be stealthily set upon from behind While, in front, Fearlessness stands alert Humility guards the rear This is an excellent arrangement Here twenty-six qualities are enumerated If we have twenty-five of these qualities, but have *ahamkara*, egoism or pride in these, there is every chance of stealthy attack from behind in which we shall lose all that we have now That is why the virtue called Humility is stationed in the rear In the absence of Humility, there is no knowing when vitory will turn into defeat Thus, by placing Fearlessness in front and Humility in the rear we can develop all the good qualities It would not be wrong to say that the twenty-four good qualities placed in between these two great virtues, are for the most part synonyms of *ahimsa* Compassion, tenderness, forgiveness, serenity, patience, non-violence, loyalty, all these are only other names of *ahimsa* In the twine qualities of *adhimsa* and *satya*, non-violence and truth, all good qualities are included, they are the essence of them all But the case of fearlessness and humility is different Fearlessness makes advance possible and humility ensures safely With our stock of *satya* and *ahimsa*, we should advance fearlessly Life is vast We should travel in it without let or hindrance If lest we should make a false step, we remain ever humble, no danger will come to us Now we can proceed jovously, applying truth and non-violence everywhere The truth is that *satya* and *ahimsa* grow only through fearlessness and humility

While, on one side, the army of good qualities is thus, arrayed, on the other, the army of bad qualities also stands ready There is no need to say very much about bad qualities like vanity and ignorance Our whole life is founded on vanity And of ignorance it can be said that it has become a beautiful excuse, which we trot out on every occasion, almost as if ignorance were anything but a

crime But the Lord says, "ignorance is a sin" Socrates says just the opposite of this In the course of his trial the says "What you think is a sin is only ignorance, and how are you going to punish ignorance ?" But the Lord says, 'Ignorance too is sin' According to legal theory ignorance of Law cannot establish innocence Ignorance of God's law is also a great crime. Both the Lord and Socrates mean the same thing The Lord tells us how to regard our own ignorance, and Socrates tells us how to regard the sins of others Other people's sins we should forgive. But it is a sin to excuse even ignorance in oneself We should not allow the least vestige of ignorance to remain in ourselves

(90) The Growth of Ahimsa · Four Stages

The divine qualities on the one side, the demonic on the other--thus the two armies stand arrayed against each other Of these, we should leave the demonic qualities and join the divine quantities The divine qualities of *satya* and *ahimsa* have been developed from time immemorial And between then and now, during all this time, too, there has been great progress But, even so, there is plenty of room for further progress We have by no means reached the end of the progress As long as we belong to a social organism, there will be endless opportunity for development Though the individual development is complete, there still remains the growth of society, the nation and the world Offering his own development as manure, the individual should help society and the millions of people in the nation to grow Though from the beginning of time *ahimsa* has been developed by man, the process of evolution is still going on

It is worth studying how *ahimsa* has developed We would then understand how the life of religion has developed step by step and what scope there is for further growth In the beginning the non-violent man had to consider how to save himself from the attacks of the violent At first the *kshatriya* class was set up for the protection of society, but it went too far and started devouring society itself Then the non-violent *brahmins* began to consider how society could be saved from these power-mad *kshatriyas* Parasurama, though a devotee of *ahimsa* himself resorted to violence He set out to destroy the *kshatriyas* For removing the violence of the *kshatriyas*, he himself adopted violence Though this was an effort of *ahimsa*, the attempt did not succeed Twenty-

one times he destroyed the *kshatriyas*, still they survived, because the method was wrong in its very basis He who set out to destroy the *kshatriyas* became a *kshatriya* himself and added to their numbers How then could the *kshatriya* caste be destroyed ? He himself had become a *kshatriya*, and the seed of violence survived If one cuts down the trunk and branches of a tree, but preserves the seed, one will only see the tree sprouting up again and again Parasurama was no doubt fellow, but his attempt was strange Himself becoming a *kshatriya*, he tried to clear the world of *kshatriyas* He should have begun with himself He should have cut off his own head first When I point to Parasurama's fault here, it does not mean that I am more intelligent than he Compared with him, I am a child, but I stand on his shoulders, and can, therefore, see much further without effort The very basis of Parasurama's action was wrong It is not possible to remove violence when one is oneself full of violence On the contrary, one only adds to the number of the violent But this was not realised at the time The great men of those days, men of non-violence, acted according to their lights Parasurama was a great exponent of non-violence for that age He did not practise violence for the sake of violence He did violence in order to establish non-violence

But that experiment failed Then came the age of Rama Then the *brahmins* began to think about it again They had already given up violence, they had resolved never to commit violence themselves How then to escape the attacks of *rakshasas* ? They thought, "Here are these *kshatriyas* who practice violence anyhow, why should not the *rakshasas* be destroyed through them ? One uses a thorn to remove a thorn We shall stand aside " That is why, to protect his *yajna*, sacrifice, Visvamitra took Rama and Lakshmana and had the *rakshasas* destroyed by them Now we think, "The *ahimsa* that cannot protect itself, that cannot stand on its own legs, this lame *ahimsa*, how can it sustain itself ?" But men like Vasishtha and Visvamitra saw nothing wrong in finding protection in the strength of the *kshatriyas* But what if there was no *kshatriya* like Rama ? Then Visvamitra would have said, "I would rather die than commit violence " For the experiment of ending violence through violence had already been attempted Now this much had been clearly accepted that they would not give up their own non-violence If they could not

find a *kshatriya*, they would prefer to die To that extent the ground had been prepared In the *Aranyakanda* of the *Ramayana*, there is an episode Walking in the Dandaka forest, Rama asks, "What are these heaps ?" The *rishis* answer, "These heaps are made up of the bones of brahmins, of non-violent brahmins When the violent *rakshasas* attacked them, they did not resist They lost their lives It is their bones that are piled up here " In this non-violence one sees the self-sacrifice of the brahmins, but, at the same time, they had a wish that others would protect them Where there is such weakness, non-violence cannot reach perfection

In later times, good men went further and tried a third method They resolved, "We shall never seek the help of others to save ourselves Our *ahimsa* is enough to protect us That is the only true defence " But this experiment was conducted on the individual plane They perfected this individual method, but it stopped with the individual If violent men attacked society and men went and appealed to those saints and asked, "What shall we do now ?", it is doubtful whether they would have given a definite answer These saints, who had practised *ahimsa* in their own lives to perfection, would only have said, "Brothers, we can do nothing " It is childish impertinence on my part to find fault with the saints in this way, but I am only describing what I see, sitting on their shoulders, May they forgive me for this ! And they will, for great is their forgiveness It would not be true to say that they were never moved to use the method of *ahimsa* on the social plane It may be that the conditions of the time did not seem propitious And so they experimented individually, by themselves But it is out of such experiments, conducted separately by individuals, that a science is born Science arises from the combined experience of many

After these individual experiments of saints, today we are conducting the fourth experiment And that is, the whole of society joining together to oppose violence with the methods of *ahimsa* Thus, there have been four experiments so far In each of them there have been and there are imperfections This is inevitable in the course of progress But it must be said that each method was perfect for its time And ten thousand years later, people will see even in our non-violent struggle an element of violence Many more experiments in pure *ahimsa* will of course take place yet Not only *jnana*, *karma* and *bhakti*, but all good

qualities are evolving There is only one perfection, and that is the Supreme The *pura-shottama-yoga* of the Bhagavad Gita is complete, but in individual life and social life these qualities are yet to develop fully

Words to keep growing The *rishis* are considered to be the seers of the *mantras*, not the makers of them For it is not as if the meaning they found in the *mantras* is the only true meaning They had one vision of it To us, coming after them, a more evolved meaning may appear That we can see a little more than they is not due to any special merit in us, for we only build on the foundations they laid I have been speaking so much on the growth of *ahimsa* alone That is because, if we take the common essence of all these good qualities, we shall find that it is *ahimsa* Moreover, we are engaged today in a non-violent struggle And so we considered the evolution of this principle

(91) A Great Experiment in Ahimsa Giving up Meat-eating

Till now we saw one aspect of *ahimsa*, how a non-violent man defends himself against the attacks of the violent, how *ahimsa* has evolved in the struggle between individuals But there is also a conflict between man and animal Man has not yet been able to put an end to conflict between human beings, and he lives by filling his stomach with the flesh of animals Men cannot stop fighting with one another even now, nor can they live without eating helpless lower animals which also live Man cannot yet live like a man Though he has existed for thousands of years, he has not yet learnt how to live But, now, even in this matter there is a progress There was a time when man lived on animals only But even then, the more intelligent, the nobler ones, did not like this They laid down a restriction that, if they had to eat meat, they would eat only the flesh of animals offered in sacrifice The intention behind this was to limits violence Many people gave up meat altogeter, but those who could not do so were permitted to offer it to the Lord in sacrifice, do a little penance, and then eat it It was thought then that, as a result of the condition that one could only eat meat in a *yajna*, a sacrifice, violence would be controlled But later on, *yajna* became common and whoever felt like it performed a sacrifice and ate the meat Then the Lord Buddha went a step further He said, "If you want to eat meat, eat it. But don't bring the name of God into

it" The aim of both these statements is the same, that violence should by controlled, that somehow people should be drawn into the path of self-control Both from the performance of *yajnas* and from non-performance of them, we learnt to give up meat Thus, little, we gave up eating meat

In the history of the world it is only in India that this great experiment has been attempted. Millions of people here have given up meat-eating If today we do not eat meat, it is no mark, of our greatness Because of the merit of our ancestors we have got used to this Why, we are surprised when we hear or read that the *rishis* of old ate meat We say, "What nonsense! How could *rishis* eat meat? It's impossible" On the other hand. their greatness is that, though used to taking meat, they had self-control enough to give it up. We do not have to go through all that trouble now We have, without effort on our part, inherited their virtues

In Bhavabhuti's "*Uttararama Charita*," Vasishtha arrives at the hermitage of Valmiki To welcome him a young calf is killed A small boy says to an older boy, "The big bearded tiger that came to our *ashram* today has eaten up our little calf, hasn't it" And the bigger boy says, "Hush! He is the great *rishi* Vasishtha You mustn't say such things" The fact that they ate meat in ancient times, and that we don't do so now, does not mean that we are better than they The fruit of their experience has come to us easily We should now progress further We should make an effort to give up even milk altogether It is degrading for man to drink the milk of other animals Ten thousand years hence the men of the future will say of us, "Why did our ancestors have to take a solemen vow not to drink milk? Ram! Ram! How could they bring themselves to drink milk? Were they such savages?" We should fearlessly and humbly make experiments and progress steadily The tree of truth should throw out new branches There is plenty of room for developmeat No quality has as yet evolved to its fullness

(92) The Three Asurik Ambitions Power, Culture, Wealth

We should develop the divine tendencies and keep away from the demonic The Lord describes the demonic qualities so that we may keep away from them There are three important things here The essence of the demonic character is contained in "power,

culture and wealth" Such people believe that theirs is the only great culture and their over-weening ambition is to thrust it on the whole world To the question, "Why should our culture be thrust on others?" they answer, "Because it is the best" "How is it the best?" "Because it is ours" To the *asurik* man as to the *asurik* empire, these three things are necessary

The *brahmins* too believe, "Ours is the best culture of all Our *Vedas* contain all wisdom Vedic culture should be victorious all over the world" "*Agrataschaturo vedaan prshthatah sasaram dhanuh*," "the four *Vedas* in front, the bow and arrow ready at the back" Thus equipped, fly the flag of your culture everywhere But where there is the strung bow and arrow at the back, the poor *Vedas* in the hands are as good as finished and done with The Muslims too think that what is found written in the Quran is alone true The Christians think likewise They feel that no matter how virtuous a non-Christian may be, he can never enter Heaven unless he has faith in Jesus They have provided only one door to the temple of God, and that is the door of Jesus People build for themselves houses with many doors and windows, but for the house of their poor, dear Lord they provide only one door Everybody imagines,

> "I am the noblest born, my wealth is great
> Where is my equal?"

Who am I? I belong to the line of Bharadvaja I can trace without a break my lineage from that great *rishi* People in the West feel the same way They say "Noble Norman blood runs through my veins" Don't we in our country trace a *guru-sishya* line? It begins with Siva, the *adiguru*, the first teacher And then, Brahma or somebody else, then Narada and Vyasa, then some other *rishi*, then, in between, ten or fifteen other names, and after them, my *guru*, and then, finally, myself Through this pedigree, we try to prove our own greatness and that of our culture My dear fellow, if inneed your culture is great, let your conduct reveal it Let its splendour pervade your life But this doesnt's happen The desire to spread throughout the world the culture that we do not practise in our own life, in our own home—this way of thinking is *asurik*

"My culture is the noblest," we say It is just like this to

think, "I am the only person fit to hold all the wealth of the world I want all the world's wealth, and I will make it mine" And why should I make it mine ? To divide it equally among all In order to do this, I first bury myself in this wealth Akbar too said in the same way "Why don't these Rajputs join my empire ? If there is one big empire, peace would be established" Akbar sincerely believed this The *asuras* of our day too think that they should collect all the wealth of the world What for ? To distribute it again to everybody

And for this I need power All power should be concentrated in one hand The whole world should come under my control "Self-rule" is my rule To obey me is freedom In this way, culture, power and wealth—these three are encouraged by the *asurik* temperament

There was a time when the *brahmins* ruled society They made the *sastras* and the codes of law, kings bowed before them The age passed and gave place to the age of the *kshatriyas* Their horses roamed free over their empire, and they went in triumphal progress in all four directions And this *kshatriya* culture too went as it came The *brahmin* said, "I am the giver of knowledge, the others are takers Who but me can be the *guru*, the teacher ?" The *brahmins* were proud of their culture The *kshatriyas* set store by power, saying "I killed this man today, I shall kill some other man tomorrow' Then came the age of the *vaisyas* "Hit the back if you like, but not the belly"—this is the whole philosophy of the *vaisya* His heart is in his stomach "This wealth is mine, and that, too, shall become mine"—this is his prayer, this is his resolve Do not the English tell us, "If you want *svaraj*, take it But give us the right and facilities to sell our manufactured goods here Then by all means preserve your culture Keep your loin cloth and sit there with your culture"? The wars of today are all waged for the sake of trade This age too will go, it has already begun to depart All these are forms of the *asurik sampat*

(93) Self Control, the Way to Shake off Desire and Anger

We should push away from us our *Asurik* tendencies Briefly, *asurik sampat* means desire, anger and greed These three are forces that set the world dancing Let us put an end to this dance We must give it up Anger and greed spring from desire When circumstances favour desire, greed arises when they obstruct

desire, anger arises, Again and again the *Gita* tells us to beware of these three This is what is said at the end of the Sixteenth Section, that desire, anger and greed are the three broad gateways of Hell They are thronged by crowds coming in and going out The roads to Hell are very wide There is room for many motor cars, you can find many companions on the way But the path of truth is narrow

How then are we to escape from desire, anger and greed ? By accepting the way of control of the senses This is the path laid down in the *sastras* The *sastras* are nothing but the experience of the saints The *sastras* are made up of the experience the saints gained through their efforts Therefore, hold fast to this principle of self-control Do not have any doubt or fear that it will fail Please do not raise such arguments or questions as, ' What will happen to the world if desire and anger disappear ? Should not the world go on ? Should there not be at least a little desire, a little anger ?" There is already plenty of desire and anger, my brothers, a great deal more than you need Then why do you confuse your minds needlessly ? There is a grain or two more of desire, anger and greed than you wish for Do not worry yourself that the human race will come to an end when desire dies No matter how many children you produce, a day will come when the very name of man will disappear from the earth The scientists say so The earth is slowly getting colder At one time the earth was excessively hot Then there were no living creaters on it Life had not been born A time will come hereafter when the earth will become excessively cold and all life will perish This may take millions of years No matter how prolific you are, that final dissolution is certain The *avatars* of the Lord are for the preservation of *dharma*, not for the preservation of numbers As long as there is one man devoted to *dharma*, one man who is afraid of sin and steadfast in truth, there is no cause for worry The Lord will take care of him Whether thousands of people are alive or dead makes no difference when their *dharma* is dead

Remembering all this, live an ordered life in creation, controlling your senses Do not follow your own whims The good of the world does not mean doing the things the world wants you to To go on increasing the population, or piling up wealth, is not progress Developing is not a matter of numbers If society multiplies beyond limit, people would start killing one another,

Man would first feed fat on animals and birds, Then, perhaps, on his own children If he accepts that there is any value in desire and anger, there is not the least doubt that man will end up by eating man Doing good to the world means showing mankind the pure and beautiful path of virtue If by freeing itself from lust and anger the race of man disappears from the earth, it will reappear on Mars There is no need to worry The unseen God pervades the universe He will take care of us Therefore, first let us become free There is no need to look very far into the future Do not worry about all creation and the entire human race Increase your own moral power Fling aside desire and anger "Free your own neck from the noose first" This would be achievement enough

There is joy in standing on the shore and watching from after the surge of the sea of *samsara* But what joy is there in the sea for the man who is drowning in it, with his eyes and nose full of water? The saints stand on the shore and enjoy the sight of the sea Unless we bring into our lives this saintly attitude of remaining aloof from *samsara*, we can have no joy. Be like the lotus-leaf, and let the water roll off you The Buddha has said, "The saints stand on the summit of the hill, and look down at *samsara* and find it trivial" If you, too, climb to the top and look down, this vast expanse would appear trivial And your mind will not be drawn to *samsara*.

The Lord, in this Section, exhorts us to give up the demonic and acquire the divine qualities Come, let us make the effort

XVII

ANOTHER SUPPLEMENT PROGRAMME FOR THE SEEKER

(94) A Disciplined Life Frees the Mind

Dear brothers, we are slowly approaching the end of our study In the Fifteenth Section, we saw the complete science of life The Sixteenth Section was a supplement In the mind of man and in society which is its image, a great war rages between two attitude, two ways of living, two sets of qualities Of these, we should develop the divine qualities—that was the teaching contained in the first supplement, the Sixteenth Section Today,

in the Seventeenth Section, we come to the second supplement Looked at in one way, we can call this the *yoga* of "*karya-krama*," of regularity in action The *Gita* here indicates our daily routine Today we shall examine the programme for every day

If we wish our nature to be free and joyous, we should bring activities into some order Our daily actions should proceed on an accepted basis It is only when our life proceeds within bounds and in an accepted, disciplined way, that the mind can be free The river flows at its own sweet will, but the flood is bound in the two banks If it were not thus bound, its freedom would be wasted Keep before your eyes the example of the *jnani*, the seer The sun is the teacher of the seers The Lord taught *karma-yoga* first to the sun Then, from the sun, it came to Manu, that is, to man the thinker The sun is free and independent He is regular—it is in this regularity that the essence of his freedom lies We have seen from experience that, if we are in the habit of walking regularly on the same road we are able to think about other things while walking, without paying attention to our steps If we walk on a new road every day, all our attention is concentrated on the road Then the mind can have no freedom It follows that in order that life may be not burdensome but joyful, we should limit our activities and order them aright

Therefore, the Lord sets down in this Section a programme of action At our birth we are born into three orders The *Gita* has laid down this programme in order that man may fulfil the functions of these three orders and make his life happy What are these three? The first is the body that wraps us The second is the vast universe that surrounds us, the boundless creation of which we are a part The society into which we are born, our parents, our brothers and sisters, our neighbours—these form the third Every day we use these three orders, we wear them out The *Gita* wishes that we should try unremittingly to replenish what is lost through us, and thus make our life fruitful We should perform without any thought of self these three sets of duties we were born with

Yes, we should fulfil these duties, but what is the method, of doing so? The method is to combine *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas*, sacrifice, the giving of gifts and penance These words we know,

but not their meaning If we understand their meaning and bring it into our lives, body, Nature and society all three orders, will benefit, and our whole life will shine with freedom and joy

(95) The Yoga of Activity—Three Kinds

To understand this, let us first see what "*yajna*" means Every day we make use of Nature If a hundred of us crowd together in one spot for a day that part of Nature appears spoilt We foul the atmosphere and mess up the whole place In eating food we consume creation, little by little We should make up for it It is for this that the institution of *yajna* is created What is the purpose of *yajna* ? To make up for the harm that has been caused to creation—this is *yajna* We have been ploughing the earth for thousands of years and thus impoverishing it *Yajna* says, "Return its strength to the soil Plough the land and feed it with sunlight Give it manure "

To make good the loss, that is one purpose of *yajna* Another purpose is to purify the things we use We use the well and make the place all round it dirty and slushy This part of creation, thus disfigured, we should clean up We have to remove the dirt We should make up for loss and we should purify In addition to these, we should do a little direct construction This too is included in *yajna* If we wear cloth, we should spin a little every day and make something new, Growing cotton, raising crops, spinning and weaving, all these are acts of *yajna*, sacrifice Whatever we do in a *yajna* should not be done for our own sake, but with the feeling that it is one's duty to make up for the loss that one has caused This is not altruism We are, from the beginning, debtors We are born into the world with a load of debt on our heads Whatever we do to discharge this debt is *yajna* or service, not altruism By this service we must discharge our debt At every step we use the order of creation Therefore, we have to do *yajna* to replenish loss, to purify things and to create new things

The second order is our human society Father, mother, teacher, friend, all these toil for our sake "*Dana*", the rite of giving, was instituted in order to discharge this debt to society This, and not doing good to others, is its meaning I have received from society boundless service When I came into this

world, I was week and helpless This society brought me up so that I, then so little, have grown so big Therefore I in my turn should serve society "Doing good" is serving someone from whom we have received no service But in this case we have already received everything from society The service that we render to free ourselves from this debt to society, that is *dana* To help human society to progress is *dana* The effort made to replenish Nature's loss is *yajna*, the help given through body, mind, substance and other means to dischage the debt to society is *dana*

Besides these, there is a third order, that of the body This too wears out day by day We wear out by use our mind, our knowledge, our senses *Tapas*, penance, has been prescribed in order to remove the defects and distortions that arise in the body

Thus it is our duty to act in such a way that the work of these three order—Nature, society and the body—may proceed and efficiently We create any number of good and bad institutions, but these three orders were not instituted by us They have comes to us naturally They are not put together by any man Therefore it is our natural *dharma* to replenish through *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas* the wear and tear in these three orders If we act in this way, all the energy in us will be harnessed to this purpose There will be nothing left for other things We shall need all our energy to keep these three—orders—Nature, society and the body,—in good condition If we too could say like Kabir, "Lord, I am returning the shawl just as you gave it to me See it for yourself," that would be reward enough But in order to deserve this reward, we should bring into actual practice the triple programme of *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas*

Here we have regarded *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas* as if they were three different things, but to tell the truth, there is no difference between them For the three orders of Nature, society and the body are not absolutely distinct Society is not outside creation, nor for that matter is the body These three together make up the beautiful order of Nature The creative effort we make, the *dana* we give and the *tapas* we perform all these can be called *yajna* in the comprehensive sense. The *Gita* in the Fourth Section speaks of *yajnas* like the *yajna* of *dravya*, matter, and that of

tapas, austerity

All the service we render to these three orders will take the form of *yajna* But it is necessary to keep this service disinterested In this there can be no room whatever for expecting any fruit, for we have already received the fruit The burden of debt has already settled on our heads What we have taken, we must now return Through *yajna* we maintain equilibrium in Nature, through *dana* in society, and through *tapas* in the body Thus this programme is intended to preserve the state of balance in all the three orders Through this, purity is attained and evil thoughts eliminated

For the sake of this service, it is necessay to take some food Eating too is a part of *yajna* The *Gita* calls this eating of food "*aahaara*," offerings As the engine needs coal, the body needs food for its fuel Although this offering of food is not in itself *yajna*, it is clearly an element in the fulfilment of *yajna* To fetch a flower from the garden and place it on the head of the image is worship, but so too is working in the garden to produce the flower Any action performed for the sake of *yajna* is also a kind of worship It is only when we offer food to the body that it will serve our purpose Any action which is a means to the performance of *yajna* is itself *yajna* The *Gita* calls these actions "ancillary actions," acts of *yajna* The offerings I make to the body to sustain it for service are *yajna* The food accepted for the sake of service is holy

Again, all these things must spring from sincere devotion. The inward attitude should be one of surrendering all service to the Lord This is a great thing Without an attitude of surrender to the Lord, one cannot be full of service If we forget what is most important, surrender to the Lord, we shall get nowhere

(96) Making the Means Pure

But then, when can we surrender all our actions to the Lord ? Only when they are *sattvik*, purified Then, and only then can we do so *Yajna dana*, *tapas*, all should be made pure We saw, in the Fourteenth Section, the philosophy of making our actions *sattvik* In this Section, the *Gita* explains its application

In this plan of purification, the *Gita* has two aims The

service that is being rendered to the world through my external actions of *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas*, can itself, viewed from within, be described as spiritual exercise The service of creation and the development of the spirit do not demand two different courses of action, service and spiritual growth are not two different things For both, the effort made, the action performed, is the same And even this action has at last to be surrendered to the Lord Service to Society, spiritual effort, and the attitude of surrender to the Lord,—this *yoga*, this composite result, must flow from the same action

Two things are needed to make *yajna sattvik* They are avoiding fruitless actions and also the desire for fruit If there is expectation of fruit in *yajna*, it becomes *rajasik*, if it is fruitless, it becomes *tamasik*

Spinning is *yajna* But if we do not inform it with spirit, our mind is not one-pointed and the *sutra-yajna* becomes lifeless Unless the mind within joins the hand working in the outer world, the whole action departs from the prescribed order And disorderly actions become lifeless Into such action, *tamas* enters Through it, no noble thing can be created From it, no fruit will grow Even though there is no desire for fruit in performing *yajna*, it ought to yield noble fruit If the mind is not in the action, if the spirit is not in it, then it becomes a burden How then can it yield good fruit ? If the outward action goes wrong, it must be because the mind did not accompany it Therefore, pour your soul into the action Bind the outward with the inward In order to discharge our debt to creation, we must produce noble fruit One should not allow action to become fruitless, that is why it is essential that inward feeling should combine with outward action according to rule and order

When, in this way, disinterestedness finds place in our hearts and fruitful action goes on according to rule, our mind and heart will become increasingly pure What is the touchstone of inward purity ? Examine the outward action If that is not flawless and beautiful, we may take it that there is impurity in the mind too When does beauty come out in action ? On the action performed with pure heart and unstinted effort, the Lord sets the seal of His approval, His grace When the Lord, well-pleased, touches the action with the hand of love, beauty appears there Beauty is the grace of the Lord granted to pure and unremitting effort When

sculptor gets absorbed in carving, he feels that this beautiful image was not shaped by his hands As he goes on chiselling, at the last moment, somehow, from somewhere, beauty comes to itself and settles there Without *chitta suddhi*, inward purity, how can the art of God manifest itself ? The beauty, the loveliness of the image, is nothing but the beauty of the sculptor's soul that has been poured into it The image is an image of our mind All our actions are images of our mind If our mind is beautiful, its image in the medium of action will also be beautiful We should judge the purity of outward action by the purity of the mind, and the purity of the mind by outward action

One word more ! And this is, in all these actions *mantra* too is necessary Action without *mantra* is meaningless While spinning, bear this *mantra* in your heart "Through this thread I tie myself to the poor in this land" If we work for hours on end, but without this *mantra* in our heart, it is all wasted The mind will not attain purity through this action Consider spinning If we apply to the action this *mantra*, that the Lord hidden in the cotton manifests Himself in the form of the thread, the action will then become truly pure and beautiful It will become worship, service to the people and to God In the tiny month of the child Krishna, Mother Yasoda saw the whole of Creation In this thread too, charged with *mantra*, you will begin to see the whole universe

(97) Purity in Food

For true service, purity in food is necessary As is the food, so is the mind The food we eat should be regulated Not what food we take, but how much we take, is the more important question It does matter what food we choose to eat, but it matters even more that it is in right measure Whatever we eat will necessarily have its effects What do we eat for ? That good service may be done Eating too forms a part of *yajna* Look on food with the *bhavana* that it is necessary in order to make the *yajna* of service yield fruit Food should be pure and clean The food that a man eats can never be too pure Our society has performed enough *tapas* for the sake of purity in food In India, many efforts have been made towards this Thousands of years have passed in these experiments We cannot tell how much *tapas* has gone into them It is only in India that many entire communities have freed themselves of meat-eating Even those who eat meat

give it a secondary place and do not take it every day, they even feel that they are doing something improper, these too have in their minds given up meat It was too restrict meat-eating that *yajnas* were first developed, and it was again for the same purpose that *yajna* was later abandoned The Lord Krishna changed the very meaning of the word "*yajna*" Sri Krishna increased the importance of milk The wonderful things that Krishna did are not few, but which Krishna are the people of India mad after? The name most dear to the people of India is "Gopala-Krishna" The young and the old, every one, knows and loves Krishna, the cow-hered, with the flute at His lips, in the midst of His cows The great benefit of learning to cherish the cow was that people gave up meat-eating Cow's milk came to be valued, and meat-eating fell off in importance

Still, it is not as if perfect purity in food has been attained We should now make efforts for further progress The Bengali's eat fish, and so many people are surprised at this But it is not right that we should condemn them for this Bengal produces only rice and that does not provide enough nutrition for the body We shall have to conduct experiments to find out what vegetable substitutes can be found for fish For this purpose men of heroic sacrifice will be born It is such people who lead society forward The sun keeps burning. and that is why, wherever we go, we are able to maintain our normal temperature and remain alive When in a society shining suns of *vairagya*, desirelessness, appear and, breaking the bonds of environment with the power of faith, fly without wings into the sky of the ideal, then we ordinary people acquire the little *vairagya* that is useful in the world I often think, on such occasions, of how much *tapas* and *rishis* had to perform to stop meat-eating, and how many lives had to be sacrificed

By now our society has to this extent attained purity in food This treasure which our ancestors have earned through endless sacrifice, let us not lose it Do not let go this special excellence of Indian culture It is not enough that we somehow manage to exist That is easy Even the animals do so Then, we are like the animals? No, there is a difference The growth of this difference is the growth of culture Our country has conducted strenuous experiments in giving up meat-eating Let us continue them At any rate, let us maintain our present position and not go back

I stress this because at present a great many people have

begun to show a liking for meat Today, the cultures of the East and of the West are influencing each other I am confident that the ultimate outcome of this will be good The impact of Western culture disturbs our unthinking beliefs When blind faith is shaken, there is no harm in it What is good will remain, and what is bad will be destroyed But blind unbelief should not replace blind belief It is not as if belief alone can be blind, that it has a monopoly of blindness Unbelief too can be blind

People have begun to think again about meat-eating The appearence of a new idea, whatever it may be, delights me. It shows signs of wakefulness But if one wanders around robbing one's eyes, not yet fully awake, one may stumble and fall Therefore, until one is fully awake and can see steadily, it is good that one keeps in check one's hands and feet Consider well, look carefully up and down, from right and left, inside and out, and all round Use the scissors of the mind on *dharma* The *dharma* that can be cut up by thought is worthless, let it go That which your scissors, cannot cut, but which on the contrary shatters your scissors, that is true *dharma* *Dharma* is not afraid of thought Therefore, think, but do not rush into action. If you do something while only half awake, you will fall down However, powerful the thought, forbear from action for a while Exercise discipline Do not throw away the virtue stored up for you

(98) The Gita's Programme for Harmonious Living

Purity of food keeps the mind pure The body gains strength. One is able to do good to society Both the individual and society are happy There will be no conflict in a society where *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas* as found, where actions take place according to rule and are accompanied by *mantra*, contemplation As, when two mirrors face each other, each is reflected in the other, in the same way, true to the laws of inflection, the individual and society will mutually strengthen peace My happiness is that of society, and society's is mine We can examine each of these and find that they are both one We shall experience *advaita*, oneness, everywhere Separateness and disloyalty disappear The *Gita* shows us the way of establishing such an order If we follow the *Gita's* plan in our daily programme of action, how good it would be !

But today there is conflict between the individual and society.

How this conflict can be resolved is the talk everywhere

Where does the individual stop and society begin ? When is primary and which secondary ? Which is superior ? Upholders of individualism regard society as lifeless When the sepoy comes before him, the commander speaks to him gently He would even use the honorific plural But his words of command to the regiment would be peremptory It is as if he considers the regiment as a lifeless log to be kicked about hither and thither on the field We see, here too, how the individual is alive, but the collective is lifeless Here you are, two or three hundred people in front of me Whether you like it or not, I go on speaking at you, I keep saying whatever occurs to me I treat you as if you were lifeless But if any of you approach me, I shall have to listen carefully and answer questions after a great deal of thinking But now, I make you sit still here for hours together

"Society is inert, the individual is conscious"—so say some Others magnify the collective My hair has fallen, my hand is broken, my eyes are gone, my teeth have dropped out In addition to this, one lung is useless If in spite of it all I live, it is because each organ, looked at separately, has no life of its own If any one of them perishes, the whole does not perish The collective the body, continues to live and move Thus we have two contradictory ways of thinking The conclusions you come to, depend on your point of view Creation assumes the colour of the spectacles you wear

Some give more importance to the individual, some to society This is because of the spread in society of the concept of struggle for existence But is existence meant for struggle ? Rather than this, why don't we die ? Conflict is on the side of death It is because of this that we distinguish between *svartha* and *paramartha*, between one's own good and the supreme good, the good of the Self God bless the fellow who first thought up the difference between *svartha* and *paramartha* Should we not honour the mind which created the illusion of a difference where none really exists ? It is wonderful how he set up this difference and taught it to people This is like the Great Wall of China, like making a boundary of the horizon and imagining that nothing exists beyond it The reason for all this is the absence of a life lived as *yajna* This is why the difference between the individual and society has come about

But in reality it is impossible to separate the individual and

society If a curtain is hung in the middle of a room to divide it into two and it is blown about by the wind, sometimes one part appears larger and sometimes the other The size of the compartment is not fixed and permanent, it depends on the wind The *Gita* transcends these quarrels These quarrels are imaginary But the *Gita* says, "Keep within the bounds of inner purity Then no conflict will arise between the good of the individual and that of society They will not obstruct each other" What the *Gita* specially does is to remove this difference, this conflict Even if there is a single individual who obeys the discipline of the *Gita*, the whole country will prosper, because of that single man A nation consists of the individuals in it A country in which there are no such individuals, men of knowledge and disciplined conduct,—how can we call it a nation ? What is India ? India is Rabindranath, India is Gandhi, and a few other people like them The outside world conceives of India in terms of a few such individuals Take three or four names from ancient times, four or five from the Middle Ages, and seven or eight of today, add to them the Himalays and the Ganga, and we have India This is the definition of India The rest is only a commentary on it, an expansion of it From milk we get curds, and from curds buttermilk and butter, there is no conflict To determine the quality of the milk, we determine its butter-coefficient The worth of a society is judged by its individuals There is no conflict between the individual and society How can there be ? Even between one individual and another, there should be no conflict If one is better endowed than another, what does it matter ? No one should suffer privation, and the riches of the rich should benefit society. That is enough Does it make any difference whether my money is in my left pocket or my right pocket ? After all, both are mine. When someone is rich, I am rich, the nation is rich we can establish this in practice

But we erect these walls of difference If the body and the head are separated, they would both die Therefore, do no separate the individual and society The *Gita* teaches just this, how one and the same action destroys the difference between *svartha* and *paramartha*, the good of oneself and the good of the Self Between the air in this room and the unbounded atmosphere without, there is neither difference nor conflict If I imagine that there is conflict and shut the doors and windows, I shall only be

suffocated to death If, assuming that there is no conflict, I throw open the room, boundless air flows into it The moment I cut off my land and my house from those of others, that very moment I am created of infinite wealth If this one little house of mine is burnt down or collapses, I think that all is lost, I cry and beat my breast But why should I do so ? Why weep and lament ? Why form a narrow conception at first, and then cry ? When I say that this five hundred rupees is mine, I forfeit the infinite riches of Creation When I think that these two are my brothers, all my countless other brothers in the world are cut off from me We do not think of this Look how small and narrow a man makes himself In truth, *svartha* should be *paramartha*, one's own good should be the supreme good The *Gita* shows us snch an easy and beautiful way, by which the highest co-operation and harmony can develop between the individual and society What opposition is there between the tongue and the stomach ? We should give to the tongue the amount of food the stomach needs When the stomach says enough, one should stop feeding the tongue The stomach is one organ, the tongue is another I am the king of both There is perfect oneness among all thes organs Where did you bring it from, this unhappy conflict ? Just as between the different limbs and organs of the body there is no conflict, but only harmony and co-operation, so too between the individuals in a society It is in order to develop this co-operation in society that the *Gita* teaches us the system of action consisting of *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas*, performed in purity of heart Through such action both the individual and society prosper

The man whose life is lived as *yajna* belongs to everybody Each child feels that his mother loves him alone In the same way, everyone feels that such a person belongs to him He is dear and acceptable to the whole world To everyone it appears that he is their life, their friend, their comrade

"Happy is the man whom all the world loves," says Samarth Ramdas The *Gita* teaches us how to live such a life

(99) The Mantra of Dedication

The *Gita* says that, after making one's life a *yajna*, one should dedicate it entirely to the Lord After one's life has become pure service, who should one surrender it further to the Lord ? We

and air for it to breathe Seeing this scheme of Compassion in the universe, let us fill our own lives with compassion The *Gita* gives the name of the Lord which was most current in the age That is, "*om tat sat*"

"*Om*" means "Yes, God exists" Even in this twentieth century God exists "*sa eva adya sa u svah*"—He alone exists today, yesterday He alone was, and tomorrow He alone will be He is permanent Creation is permanent And I have girded my loins and am ready to serve I am the *sadhaka*, the seeker, He is the Lord, this Creation is the offering and the means of worship It is only when our hearts are filled with this feeling that we can say that "*om*" has entered our being He exists, I exist, and my worship too goes on—thus the feeling of "*om*" should settle in our minds and find expression in our *sadhana*, our work Whenever we see the sun, we see it with its rays It cannot exist without them It never forgets its rays In the same way, whenever any one looks at us, we should be seen with our *sadhana*, our work It is only then that we shall have made "*om*" our own

Then comes "*sat*" The Lord is "*sat*," that is, He is good He is auspicious Be filled with this *bhavana* this feeling, and in Creation, enjoy His benignity Look at the trough in the water! When you fill a pitcher from the tank, the depression is filled up in a moment How benign, how loving A river cannot tolerate emptiness It runs forward to fill it up

"nadtii vegena suddhyati"

The river of Creation purifies itself by speed All Creation is good, is auspicious Let your action too be likewise In order to make our own this *sat*" this name of the Lord, all our actions should be pure and full of *bhakti* Just as the *soma* juice is filtered for the sacrifice, we too should examine all our actions and efforts constantly and make sure that they are flawless

"*Tat*" now remains "*Tat*" means "that," the other, something untouched by Creation The Supreme is different from Creation and untouched by it As the sun rises, the lotuses bloom, the birds begin to fly and darkness disappears But the sun remains afar, quite aloof from the changes it brings about When we have attained detachment, when our actions are disinterested,

we may take it that "*tat*" has entered into our lives

In this way the *Gita* teaches us how to take the Vedic Name "*om tat sat*" and and surrender all our actions to the Lord Earlier, the Ninth Section spoke of surrendering all actions to the Lord This is what is said in the *sloka* "*yet karoshi yadasnaasi*"—"Whatever you do, whatever you eat" In the Seventeenth Section this idea is more fully dealth with, that the action which is surrendered to the Lord should be *sattvik*, for only then will it be worthy of being offered to the Lord—this is specially stressed here

(100) The Name of the Lord takes away Sin

All this is very well But the question now arises, "This Name *om tat sat*, is only for the pure man What is the sinner to do ? Is there is Name which even in the mouth of a sinner is beautiful ?" The Name *om tat sat* has this power too Every one of the names of the Lord has the power to lead us from untruth to truth It can take us from sin towards sinlessness We have to purify our lives little by little The Lord will surely help In our weakness He will support us

If a man tells me, "On one side is a life pure but proud, and on the other, a life sinful but humble, which woold you choose ?", though my tongue may not utter it, I would still feel in my heart of hearts, "The sin which makes me think of the Lord, let that sin come to me If a life of virtue will bring forgetfulness of the Lord, then let me rather have the life of sin that would bring me thoughts of Him" This does not mean that I plead for a life of sin But sin is not so sinful as pride in one's virue Tukaram says,

"All this knowledge, I fear, my Lord, will only hinder me" Yes, we can do without this greatness It is far better to be a sinner and grieve

> "The child that is too clever, even the mother pushes him awaw"

But the ignorant child, the mother keeps in her lap I do not want to have a virtue that is sufficient unto into itself I would rather be a sinner clinging to the Lord The holiness of the Lord can hold all my sins and still survive Let us try to avoid sins If

we fail, our hearts will weap, our minds tremble Then we will remember the Lord He has been standing by, watching the fun Cry out to Him, "I am a sinner, I have, therefore, come to Your door " The virtuous man has a right to think of the Lord because he is virtous The sinner has a right to think of the Lord because he is a sinner

XVIII

CONCLUSION—THE FULFILMENT OF THE RENUNCIATION OF FRUIT—THE GRACE OF THE LORD

(101) Arjuna's Last Question

My brothers, now by the grace of the Lord, we have reached the Eighteenth Section In this world of chance and change and mutability, the fulfilment of any resolve depends on the will of the Lord And in jail, at every step, one experiences uncertainty To start anything in jail and to expect to conclude it here if far-fetched When we started this study of the *Gita*, we did not expect that it would be possible to finish it here But, by the will of God, we are approaching the end

In the Fourteenth Section, life' that is, all our activity, was divided into three classes, *sattvik*, *rajasik* and *tamasik* Of the three, we learnt that we should give up the *rajasik* and *tamasik*, and take hold of the *sattvik* Then, in the Seventeenth Sections, the same matter was treated in a different way *Yajna*, *dana* and *tapas*, sacrifice, gifts and penance, or, in one word, *yajna*, sacrifice, is the essence of life Then, in the Seventeenth Sections, it was suggested that actions like eating, which are ancillary to sacrifice, should be accepted only as a form of sacrifice, and only after making them *sattvik* We should accept only those actions which are *sattvik* in nature and come to us in the form of sacrifice it is proper that we give up all other kinds of action We have also seen why we should constantly remember the *mantra*, ' *om tat sat* " "*Om*" stands for constancy, "*tat*" for detachment, and ' *sat*" for the *sattvik* nature, for purity In our endeavour, there should be constancy, detachment and purity Only then can we surrender it to the Lord From all this it appears that some actions should be done and others given up

If we look at the whole message of the *Gita*, we are taught in

place after place that we should not renounce action The *Gita* speaks of the remunciation of the fruits of action, Everywhere in the *Gita* it is taught "Go on constantly performing action, but keep renouncing the fruits of it" This is one side of it The other appears to be that we should perform some actions and renounce others Therefore, in the beginning of the Eighteenth Section, Arjuna asks the final question, "On the one hand, it is said that no matter what action we do, we should first renounce the fruit It is said on the other that some actions must be perforce renounced and others are worth performing How are these two statements to be reconciled ?" This question is framed so that we may understand clearly the direction in which life should proceed It seeks to understand the secret of the renunciation of fruit In what the *sastras* call "*sannyaso*" (renunciation) action should be renounced in its very form and nature That is, the form of action is itself to be renounced But in '*tyaga*," sacrifice, what is renounced is not the action, but the fruit of it Now the question is, "For the renunciation of fruit that the *Gita* enjoins, is it necessary to renounce action itself ?" Tested by the touchstone of renunciation of fruit, is there any benefit to be derived from *sannyasa*, the renunciation of action ? Where are the limits of *sannyasa* placed ? Where and what are the limits of *phalatyaga* and *saanyasa*, renunciation of fruit and renunciation of action ? This is Arjuna's question

(102) Renunciation of Fruit—the Sovereign Touchstone

In reply to this question, the Lord has said one thing clearly, that the touchstone of renunciation of fruit is of universal application The principle of renunciation of fruit can be applied everywhere There is no conflict between renouncing the fruit of all actions and renouncing *rajasik* and *tamasik* actions The nature of some actions is such that, if we apply to them the device of renouncing the fruit, they fall off of themselves Performing actions after renouncing fruit means just this, that some actions are to be given up It naturally incluces the direct renunciation of these actions

Let us consider this matter a little more deeply When we say, "The action that are interested, that spring from desire, do them after renouncing the fruit," we cut the ground from under their feet Faced with renunciation of fruit, actions that spring

from desire and actions that are forbidden cannot stand To act with renunciation of fruit is not something merely artificial, designed, or mechanical When this test is applied it becomes clear of itself what actions should be performed, and what should not be Some people complain, "The *Gita* merely teaches us to perform actions renouncing the fruit, but it does not tell us what actions to perform ' But it only appears so, it is not really so Because, once it is said, "Perform action after renouncing the fruit," it becomes clear what actions we should perform and what not Violent actions, actions filled with faleshood, actions like theft—it is quite impossible to perform them after renouncing the fruit The moment such actions are tested on the touchstone of renunciation of fruit, they simply disappear When the light of the sun spreads, all objects begin to look bright, but does the darkness too appear bright ? No, it disappears altogether This is the condition of forbidden add interested actions We must test all our actions on the touchstone of renunciation of fruit Renunciation of fruit is the test for performing any action When this test is applied, interested actions show themselves up as unworthy They are fit for *sannyasa*, fit only to be renounced What now remains is only pure *sattvik* action Such actions should be performed without egoism Renouncing interested actions is itself action Apply the scissors of renunciation of fruit to this action too Then the renunciation of iterested action will become natural

Thus we have seen three things The first is that, whatever we do, we should do it after renouncing the fruit The second is that *rajasik* and *tamasik* actions— prohibited and interested actions—when tested on the touchstone of renunciation of fruit, fall off by themselves The third is that, even to the giving up of such actions the scissors of *phalatyaga*, renunciation of fruit, should be applied We should not give room to the egoism which says "How much have I renounced !"

Why should *rajasik* and *tamasik* actions be given up ? Because they are not pure Being impure, they leave a mark on the mind of the doer But on further thought we find that even *sattvik* action has some defects Indeed in all action there is some imperfection Take even the *svadharma* of agriculture It is pure and *sattvik* But even in agriculture, which, as *svadharma*, is all *yajna*, there occurs unavoidably some *himsa*, violence So many

lives are destroyed in ploughing and other operations So too when, to prevent the surroundings of a well from becoming slushy, the ground is hardened and plastered When we open the doors and windows in the morning and the sunlight enters the house, innumerable lives are destroyed What we call cleaning up turns out to be large-scale murder If even in *sattvik* action performed as one's *svadharma* there is some flaw, what then are we to do ? That is the question

I have already said that we have yet to develop to the full all the good qualities We have tasted so far only a drop of qualities like *jnaua, bhakti, seva, ahimsa*—knowledge, devotion, service, non-violence—and so on It is not as if we really know them fully Life progresses by experience In the Middle Ages there was a theory that, because of the violence in agriculture a non-violent person should not take to it He could be a merchant Producing food was considered a sin, but not buying and selling it But by shirking action in this way, we can do good to ourselves If one goes on contracting one's actions in this way, one will end by destroying oneself As man thinks of ways of freeing himself from action, action multiplies itself In order that you may trade in grain, has not someone else to grow the grain ? Then, are you too not responsible for the violence involved in growing it ? If it is a sin to grow cotton, it is equally a sin to sell it There may be something wrong in growing cotton, but it is wrong to think of giving it up on that account To push away all actions, saying that neither this, nor that, and indeed nothing, should be done—in this attitude there is no true compassion On the other hand, this is the end of compassion When the leaves are plucked, the tree does not die, on the contrary it puts forth fresh leaves In narrowing one's action, one narrows one s soul

(103) The True way of Freeing Oneself from Activity

Now the question is, 'If there is defect in all actions, then why should we not give them all up ?'' The answer to this has already been given once The concept of giving up all actions is very beautiful The thought of it fascinases one But how is one to give up these countless actions ? Will the method of giving up *rajasik* and *tamasik* actions serve for *sattvik* actions too ? How to save oneself from those *sattvik* actions that are defective ? This would be like "*sendraaya tykshakaaya svaahaa,*" offering an

oblation "to Takshaka with Indra" The funny thing is that when a man does this, not only does Indra, the immortal, not die, but Takshaka, the mortal, escapes death and grows stronger In *sattvik* actions there is merit, but also a little defect But if, because there is some evil mixed up with the good, you would offer up, renounce, the good along with the evil, not only will the good, because of its etrengty, not perish, but evil will certainly go on increasing By this foolish kind of mixed sacrifice, the Indra of merit does not indeed perish, but the Takshaka of evil, though mortal, will escape death How then are we to renounce them? If we drive away the cat because it is a nuisance, the nuisance of the mice will increase If we destroy the snakes because they do harm, other creatures multiply and destroy the crops and, as a result, thousands of people may die Therefore, renunciation must be accompanied by intelligence

Machindranath told Gorakhnath, "Wash this boy and bring him back" Gorakhnath caught hold of the boy's feet, dashed his head against a stone, and spread him on a hedge to dry Machindranath asked him, "Have you brought the boy washed?" Gorakhnath answered, "I have washed him white and put him out to dry" Is a boy washed this way? We don't wash clothes and boys in the same way There is a lot of difference between the two So, too, there is a lot of difference between renouncing *rajasik* and *tamasik* actions and reuouncing *sattvik* actions *Sattvik* actions should be renounced in a special way

Unintelligent actions can only produce topsy-turvy results Tukaram has said,

> "Pleasure wells up within from sacrifice
> What then shall I do, O Lord"?

When we make a little sacrifice, a great joy comes and sits on our necks Thus even the little sacrifice is belied To compensate for a little sacrifice, they put up huge monuments Than these, that old hut was better It was good enough. It is better to continue to keep one's coat and turban than to wear nothing but a loin-cloth and it surround oneself with wealth and pleasure Therefore, the Lord has explained separately the way of renouncing *sattvik* action All the *sattvik* actions must be done, but we should pluck and throw away the fruit Some sections should be utterly

rooted out while of others only the fruit should be plucked and thrown away If there is a stain on the body, it can be washed off, but if the skin itself is dark in colour, what is the good of giving it a cost of whitewash ? Let the dark colour remain Why do you pay attention to it ? Do not consider it inauspicious

Once there was a man who, feeling that there was something inauspicious about his house, left it and went and settled in another village That in turn seemed dirty to him, and he went away to the forest There, as he sat under a mango tree, a bird's droppings fell on his head He said "This forest too is unfriendly " and went and stood in a river In the river, the sight of the big fish eating up the small fish filled him with disgust "The whole of creation," he concluded, 'is unkind There is no way out except through death " So he came out of the water and kindled a fire Then a gentleman who was passing by said, "My brother, why are you preparing to die ?" He replied, "Because the whole world is inauspicious " The man said, "If this unclean body of yours, this mass of flesh, begins to burn, how it would stink ! I live close by Where could I go ? When a single hair burns, it smells so awful ! And now, all this flesh of yours will burn ! Just think a little of the stench you will spread " Then the man was bewildered and exclaimed, "If one can neither live in this world nor die in it what is one to do ?"

That is to say, if we go about condemning everything as bad inauspicious, and rejecting it, we simply cannot carry on If you try to avoid small actions, other great big actions will come and sit on your head It is in the nature of action that we do not get rid of it by giving up its external from If a man spends his energies on resisting the actions which come to him naturally with the current, if he swims against the current, he will in the end succumb to weariness and be swept off by the stream He should try to cross the stream with the help of actions which flow with the current Then, little by little, actions will cease of their own accord Even without renunction of action, activity will fall off Action will not leave us, but activity will disappear

Between action and activity there is a difference For example there is a big commotion somewhere, and we want to stop it A policeman shouts at the top of his voice, "SILENCE !" To put an end to the noise there, he had to perform the intense action of shouting alone Another person comes up there and merely lifts

his finger With only this, the people become quit A third person has but to come there, and stillness descends One had to exert himself and perform an action, the action of the second was a gentle gesture, the action of the third was subtle The activity becomes progressively less but all three alike do the work of claming the people As inward purity grows, the effort in the action becomes less From effort to gentleness, from gentleness to subtlety, and from subtlety to nothingness Action is one thing, effort or activity is another Action is that which is most desired by the doer—this is the definition of action The grammarian Panini says, "*kartuh upsitatamam karma* " That is, in a sentence, "that which the subject—the *kartaa*, (the doer)—most desires to encompass is the object—the *karma*, (the action) " Action is that which is dearest to the doer—this is the definition of action Thus, in Sanskrit *karma*, action, can be expressed by using the noun in the nominative or the accusative case, but to express *kriya*, activity, an independent verb (*kriyapada*) is necessary

Understand therefore, the difference between *karma* and *kriya*, action and activity One, in his anger, shouts aloud, another expresses it without opening his moth The *jnani*, the seer, makes not the slightest effort, no *kriya*, but he performs infinite action, *karma* The mere fact of his being can confer infinite benefit on the world His presence is enough Though his hand and feet do no work, he still works As *kriya*, activity, becoms subtler and subtler, *karma*, action, becomas greater If we carry this stream of though further, we can say that, when the mind and heart become absolutely pure, in the end, activity tends towards zero and action towards infinity First effort, then gentleness, then subtlety and at last nothingness—thus, the state of inacitivity is reached of its own accord But now, infinite action takes place by itself

By pushing away the external forms of action, we do not get rid of action This we shall experience gradually, if we go on performing action regardless of fruit Browning has written

"An unbelieving Pope won't do, you say
It's like those eerie stories nurses tell,
Of how some actor played Death on a stage,
With paste-board crown, sham orb and tinselled dart,

And called himself the monarch of the world,
Got touched upon the sleeve familiarly
By Death himself Thus God might touch a Pope
At unawares, ask what his baubles mean,
And whose part he presumed to play just now ?"

The Pope would say, "I play the part because it is possible that as I go on acting, as I go through the motions of the part, some day, without my even realising it, faith will move within me "

Therefore, we should go on working without thinking of the fruit Then, little by little, we shall attain the state of actionlessness

(104) Svadharma the Final Analysis

That is, we should completely give up *rajasik* and *tamasik* actions and perform *sattvik* actions While doing so, we should retain the perception that we should not give up the *sattvik* action that comes to us in an easy and natural way, even though it has some defects If there are defects, let them be If you try to turn your back on them, other defects will overtake you Let your crooked nose remain as it is If you attempt to cut it and improve it, you will only make it more frightful It is good enough as it is Though defective, because they come naturally, *sattvik* actions should not be given up They must be performed but their fruit should be renounced

There is one thing more to say The actions that are not yours by nature, even if they seem to you easy to perform, do not perform them Do only the actions that fall to you naturally. Do not run about and get caught in the whirlpool of other, new actions The actions that have to be artificially put together keep away from them however, good they may be. Do not be beguiled by them It is only when an action comes to us naturally that its fruit can be renounced If a man runs about on all sides impelled by the greed for action, imagining that this is good, and that is good, how can he ever give up the fruit ? In this way, his whole life would be a failure While thus, for love of the fruit he desires to perform *paradharma*, the action that rightly belongs to others, he will let slip the fruit also, he will have no steadiness in life The attachment to action will cling to his

mind If there is greed even for *sattvik* actions, these too have to be given up If you wish to perform such a variety of *sattvik* actions, into them too *rajas* and *tamas* will enter Therefore, perform only the *sattvik* action that falls to you naturally and easily as your *svadharma*

Svadesi dharma, the national *dharma*, *svajatiya dharma*, communal *dharma*, and *svakalina dharma*, the *dharma* of the age—all these come together in *svadharma*, one's own *dharma* These three combine to make up *svadharma* To determine one's *svadharma*, one should consider what is helpful and appropriate to one's nature and situation, and what duty falls to one You have in you something unique and your own, your "you-ness," and that is why you are "you" In every individual there is something distinctively his own The development of a goat depends on its retaining its goat-ness It should remain a goat in order to grow It is not for the goat to wish to be a cow It is impossible for it to give up the goat-ness that has come to it through nature It would have to give up its body, and take a new birth and a new *dharma* But, in this birth, goat-ness is sacred to it Don't you know the story of the ox and the frog ? There is a limit beyond which a frog cannot blow up its body If it tried to become as big as an ox, it would only die It is not right to copy others' forms That is why it is said that *paradharma*, the *dharma* of others, is terrible and dangerous

Again, in *svadharma* there are two parts One changes, while the other does not I am not today what I was yesterday, nor shall I be tomorrow what I am today I am for ever changing The *svadharma* of childhood is just to grow In youth, I am full of society In maturity, others will get the benefit of my wisdom While one part of *svadharma* is thus changing, the other part is unchanging If we use the name of the old *sastras*, we should say, "Man has a *varna-dharma* and an *asrama-dharma* " While *varna-dharma* does not change, *asrama-dharma* is constantly changing

Asrama-dharma changes in the sense that I complete the *bramacharya* (student) stage and enter the *grhastha* (householder) stage, and then through *vanaprastha* (retirement) to *sannyasa* (renunciation) Though the *asrama* changke in this way, there is no change in *varna-dharma* I cannot cross the bounds set by

nature The very effort to do so is false The "you-ness" in you, you cannot give up This is the basis of *varna-dharma* The idea behind *varna-dharma* is very beautiful In *varna-dharma* absolutely unchangeable ? Is the *brahminhood* of the *brahmin* the *kshatriya-hood* of the *kshatriya* like the goat-ness of the goat or the cow-ness of the cow ? I accept that *varna-dharma* is not as inflexible as that, but we should understand its hidden meaning When the term "*varna-dharma*" is used for a device to maintain a social order, it must necessarily admit of exceptions We have to accept these exceptions The *Gita* too does so In other words, understanding aright both these kinds of *dharma*, we should push away from us any other *dharma*, however, beautiful and alluring it may be

(105) Renunciation of Fruit—Its Full Meaning

From our development so far of the idea of the renunciation of fruit, the following principles emerge

(1) The complete renunciation of *rajasik* and *tamasik* acitons

(2) Renouncing the fruit of this renunciation, even about this let there be no egoism of pride

(3) Without giving up the forms of *sattvik* action, renouncing only their fruit

(4) Those *sattvik* actions which are to be performed after renouncing the fruit, even if they have imperfections, should be performed.

(5) By constantly performing such *sattvik* actions with renunciation of fruit, the mind and heart get purer and purer, and thus,—from intensity to gentleness, from gentleness to subtlety, from subtlety to nothingness—activity finally ceases

(6) Activity disappears, but action - action benefitting the world—continues to take place

(7) Even of *sattvik* actions, we should perform only those which come to us naturally. We should keep aloaf from those actions that do not fall to us by nature, no matter how good they seem We should not be deluded by them

(8) Even the *svadharma* that comes to us naturallv is of two

kinds, one changing, the other permanent, *varna-dharma* does not change, but *asrama-dharma* keeps changing The *svadharma* that ought to change, we should go no changing

This will keep Nature pure Nature should keep continuously flowing It a stream begins to stagnate, it stinks It is the same with *asrama-dharma* Every man starts with his family For the sake of growth he submits himself to the bonds of family Here he acquires many kinds of experience But if, having become a family man, he gets caught in it permanently, he will be destroyed Being part of a family, which was *dharma* at first, now becomes *adharma*, for now that *dharma* has become a thing that binds him down If, out of attachment, he does not give up this old *dharma*, then a terrible situation arises One should not have attachment even to a good thing From attachment come cruel tragedies If the germs of tuberculosis enter our lungs, unawares, they consume our whole life from within In the same way, if the germs of attachment, through our carelessness, enter our *sattvik* actions, then *svadharma* will not from within Even in that *sattvik svadharma*, the evil odour of *rajas* and *tamas* will spread Therefore, the changing *dharma* of the family should slip off from us at the right time The same applies to national *dharma* too If, even in national *dharma*, out of attachment we begin to think of the good of our nation alone, this patriotism may itself be an obstacle to our development When attachment gets a footing in our hearts, our downfall begins

(106) Attainment is Only Last Stage of Sadhana

The truth is that, if you wish to attain the goal of life, then you should seek and find the *chintamani*, the precious jewel, of renunciation of fruit It will show you the way This principle of renunciation of fruit also shows us the bounds within to act When this light is near, what we should do, what we should not do, what we should change and when, all this becomes clear of its own accord But now we shall think of something quite different Should, or should not, the seeker keep in mind the ultimate state when all activities cease ? Should the seeker keep his eyes on the state of the *jnani*, the seer, who does nothing, but through whom countless actions take place ?

No. Here too we should apply the touchstone of renunciation

of fruit The shapping of our lives is so beautiful that our needs will be met even without our looking for them The noblest fruit of life is *moksha*, freedom But even for that freedom, even for that state of inactivity, we should not be greedy, That state will come to us unawares, of its own accord *sannyasa* is not the sort of thing that comes at five minutes past two, all of a sudden. *Sannyasa* is not something mechanical We cannot even be conscious of the way in which it grows in our life Therefore, give up all thought of *moksha*, the achievement of freedom

The *bhakta*, however, keeps saying to the Lord, "It is enough for me to love you I do not want the final fruit of *moksha* " After all, *moksha* too is a kind of enjoyment, a kind of fruit And to this fruit again we should apply the scissors of renunciation of fruit, but this does not mean that we shall miss *moksha* The scissors will break and the fruit grow stronger Even as we give up the desire for *moksha*, we shall be moving towards it, without being aware of it We should be so absorbed in *sadhana* that we forget all about *moksha*, and then *moksha* will come seeking us and stand in front of us Let the *sadhaka* be steeped in his *sadhana*

"maa te sango astu akarmani "

' Do not be attached to actionlessness " In the very beginning the Lord has said, "Do not be attached to the state of actionlessness to *moksha* "

Now, in the end, He says again,

"aham tva sarvapaapebhyo mokshayishyaami maa suchah "

"I shall deliver you from all sins, do not grieve " He says, "I am the master, the giver of *moksha* Do not worry about *moksha* It is enough if you attend to your effort "

By forgetting all about *moksha*, one's efforts become more noble Then *moksha* will be enamoured of you and come to you Round the neck of the seeker who without desire for *moksha*, is absorbed in *sadhana*, in effort, *Moksha-lakshmi*, the Goddess of Freedom, will throw the garland of victory

When we reach the ultimate bounds of *sadhana*, fulfilment stands there waiting for us with folded hands If a man who wants to reach home, stands under a tree in the forest, chanting

"Home, Home,"—home will remain as for away from him as ever, while he will have to remain in the forest If I think of home and take rest by the way, I shall stay for away from that ultimate place of rest I should keep steadily at the job of walking It is only then that home will, all of a sudden, come and confront me By lazily thinking of *moksha*, my effort, my *sadhana*, becomes lax, and the goal recedes Not to bother about *moksha*, but to remain absorbed in *sadhana*, is the way to attract *moksha* Do not be greedy for rest, for the state of inaction If you love *sadhana* for its own sake, *moksha* is sure to come

You will not get your answer to a problem by shouting, "Answer, Answer!" It is only by following, step by step, the appropriate method, that you will get the answer When the process is complete, the answer is found How can we reach the end before the completion of the process? How can we get the answer without method? How can the state of realisation be reached while yet one is in the state of seeking? When one is struggling in the water, what is the use of dreaming of the pleasures and the safety of the other shore? Then all one's attention should be directed, all one's energy be applied, to pushing forward, stroke by stroke First complete the *sadhana*, the process Cross the sea Freedom will come of itself

(107) The Triple State of the Siddha

When the *jnani*, the seer, reaches the final state, all activities cease, they drop off But this does not mean that in this stage there will be no activity at all Actions may be done through him, or they may not This last stage is surpassingly beautiful and noble In the state, whatever happens, there is no thought about it And whatever happens is beneficent and beautiful He now stands at the summit of *sadhana* And although he does everything now, he does nothing Even when he kills, he does not kill And when he does good, it is not he that does good

This final state of freedom is also the last stage of *sadhana* The last stage of *sadhana* is reached when *sadhana* becomes natural, easy Then there is not even the thought that one is doing something. In other words, I should call this the "amoral"

stage of *sadhana* The stage of relisation is not a moral state The little child speaks the truth, but that does not make him moral, because he has no idea of what falsehood means To be acquainted with falsehood and yet to speak the truth, that is moral action In the state of realisation, there is no falsehood at all, there is only truth Hence there is no question of morality There, no forbidden thing can enter, the ear cannot hear what should not be heard, the eye cannot see what should not be seen Only that which should be done will get done through the hands, no effort is needed That which should be avoided keeps itself off, there is no need to avoid it This is the state in which there is no morality This culminated of *sadhana*, call it a moral or beyond morality, it is here, in this transcencience of morality, that one sees the supreme heights of morality This phrase, "transcendence of morality", strikes me as happy We may also call this the state of *sattvik* action which is free of *sattva*, is beyond goodness

How is one to describe this state ? Just as before an eclipse darkness fills the sky, the shadow of the *moksha* which is to come at the death of the body begins to spread even before the body falls Even while living in the body, the experience of the state of *moksha*, which is to come, begins When we try to describe this state, words fail However much violence a man in this state commits, he does nothing By what measure can we measure his actions ? All the actions which take place through him will only be *sattvik* Even when all activity has been exhausted, he will continue to confer blessings on the world. I do not know what language to use to describe this

In this last state, there are three attitudes One is that of Vamadeva His famous declaration is, "All that there is in the universe, that am I " The *jnani*, the seer, becomes egoless He loses attachment to the body, he reaches the end of activity as such Now the attains a new state of being This state cannot be contained in one body A state of being is not a state of activity It is the state in which *bhavana* is most pervasive and intense We can, in some measure, experience this state of being The mother becomes guilty because of the sin of the child She is virtuous because of his virtue, sad because of his sorrow, and happy because of his happiness This experience of identity, in the case of the mother, is limited to her child She looks upon

her child's sins as her own The seer too, by the power of his *bhavna*, takes upon himself the sins of all the world

Though he is a sinner because of the sins of the three worlds, and a saint because of the virtues of the three worlds, even then, none of the sins and none of the virtus can touch him In the *Rudra-Sukta*, the *rishi* says

"yavaascha me tilaascha me godhuumaascha me,"

"Give me jowar, give me sesame, give me wheat" How big must be the stomach of this *rishi*, who thus, keeps demanding everything ! But he who demands all this is not the six-foot body, but the Self, assuming the form of the entire universe I call this the "*vaidika visvatmabhava*," the Vedic identity with the universe We see in the *Vedas* the culmination of this *bhavana* Narsi Mehta, the Gujarati saint, while singing holy songs, says ' My Lord, what sin have I committed, that I should feel sleepy even while I praise your name ?" But was it Narsi Mehta that felt sleepy ? No, it was those who listened to him But Narsi Mehta asked this question identifving himself with his listeners This was the state of his being This is the state of all seers In this state, it will appear to one that all the sins and all the virtuous actions of the world take place through one And that is what the seer would say too Does not the *rishi* say, "Many things that aught not to be done, I have done, I am doing, I shall do"? When this state of being is achieved, the soul begins to soar like a bird leaving the earth behind

The seer has a state of activity corresponding to this state of being What would the seer do spontaneously ? Whatever he does will only be *sattvik* Though he is still held within the limits of the human frame, his whole body and all his senses have become *sattvik*, and so all his actions can only be *sattvik* From the practical point of view, the ultimate perfection of the *sattvik* nature will be found in his actions But looked at from the point of view of identity with the universe, it will be seen that, though the sins and the virtues of the three words are his, he is not touched by them, for he has taken off this close-fitting garment of the body and thrown it away It is only when we remove and cast away this transient body that the universal form comes to us

Besides a state of being and a state of action, a third state also belongs to the seer That is the state of awareness In this

state he does not bear with either sin or virtue. He flings everything aside He is ready to set fire to the whole universe He is not prepared to take the responsibility for any action He cannot bear even the touch of it In the *jnani's* state of freedom, when he has reached the end of *sadhama*, these three states become possible

How is one to attain this state of inactivity, the final state ? We have to train ourselves not to take upon our heads the responsibility for the actions we perform, the buren of doership We should keep reflecting, "I am only the occasion, I am not the doer of the deed " We should, with humility, take up the stand that we are not the doer of action But it cannot be said that with this alone all sense of doership will leave us Little by little, this *bhavana* will grow First let us feel –' I am nothing, I am a toy in His hands, a puppet that He sets dancing " Then let us try to feel that whatever gets done is born of the body I have no contact with it All these activities belong to this corpse But I am no corpse "I am not a *sava*, but *Siva*, not a corpse, but the Lord " Let us not get caught up in the body's meshes When we have done this, we shall attain the state of the *jnani* and feel that we have no connection at all with the body Now we shall experience the three states of the final stage, as described above First, the state of activity, in which pure and perfect action takes place through the *jnani*, Secondly, the state of being in which although he feels that he does all the sins and all the virtuous actions in the three worlds, none of them ever touches him And thirdly the state of awareness in which he does not allow the slightest action to approach him He burns all action to ashes We can describe the *jnani*, the seer, through each of these three states

(108) Thou, Thou, Thou Alone

After having said all this, the Lord tells Arjuna, ' You have heard with attention all that I have been saying Now, Arjuna, consider fully, and do what you think right " Thus, the Lord generously sets Arjuna free This is the greatness of the *Gita* But once again the Lord feels pity The freedom of will that He gave to Arjuna, he takes back again He says, "Arjuna, give up your will, your effort, give up everything, and come and take refuge in me " Thus inducing him to find refuge in Him, the Lord takes back the freedom of will He has just given What this

means is Don't let any desire of your own arise in your heart Rest with the thought, 'Not my will, but His, be done " Let us of our own free will attain the experience that we do not want this freedom of will Let us feel, "I am not Thou alone art Thou art everything " The goat when alive bleats, ' Me . me me . " that is, "I, I, I " But when it is dead and its guts are made into strings and mounted on the bow for carding cotton, then, as Dadu says, it sings, ' *tuhi, tuhi, tuhi*"—"Thou, Thou, Thou alone " Now all is "Thou, Thou, Thou alone."

2

THE STEADFAST WISDOM

VINOBA BHAVE[1]

A very famous part of the Gita describes the distinctive features of the Steadfast Wisdom No other part of the book, in either ancient or modern times, has been so well known There is a reason for this The Steadfast Wisdom characterises the *Gita* ideal of a perfect man The word itself belongs to the *Gita* entirely, for it is not found in any earlier book nor in subsequent ones Various names have been given to the ideal man as, the man of perfect action (*karmayogi*), the one-liberated-in-life (*jivanmukta*), the devotee or man of faith (*bhakta*), the master of yoga (*yogarudha*), the one beyond attributes (*gunatita*). In different passages of the *Gita* itself he has been described in different ways But these descriptions have been presented by others also In the Gita they are spoken of in connection with the different spiritual disciplines They are not alien to the man of Steadfast Wisdom, being no more than aspects of his nature The characteristics of this Wisdom have been included in these descriptions, as, for instance in the fifth Chapter, where the adjective *sattvik-buddhi*, or steadiness of mind, is listed among the qualities distinguishing a *sannyasin* or *yogi* In the twelfth Chapter the description of a *bhakta* or devotee is brought to a conclusion with the adjective *sthiramati*, steadiness of conviction Without steadiness of mind no ideal can be realised The importance of this quality is, therefore, generally recognised The commentator, Sankaracharya, does, it is true, present the characteristics of Steadfast Wisdom as

proof of the achievement of liberation in life, *jivanmukti*, but this is done in the course of a detailed consideration of the meditative aspect of the final ideal from a *sadhaka's* point of view

In order to understand the distinguishing characteristics of the Steadfast Wisdom it is necessary to consider their antecedents This is done at the end of the *Gita's* second Chapter The discussion is divided into two parts (a) *samkhya*, self-knowledge, the knowledge of *brahman*, and (b) *yoga*, the knowledge of union or the art of living according to self-knowledge, *samkhya* When knowledge fuses with art, wisdom or the awareness of *brahman* is perfected This is true of any or all knowledge Take music as an example Of what use will mere knowledge be to one who, though he learns the art of singing, does not practise it ? On the other hand a person may cultivate his voice but if he has no knowledge his progress ends there The same conditions prevail in metaphysics and, consequently, in human life also Man's knowledge of essences, of truth, is implicit in his intelligence and finds expression only in his conduct His conduct shows the extent of his knowledge and its nature Though if he comes to know himself Differences between knowledge and practice exist but there should be no conflict And the differences must be and eliminated bv unremitting effort This is the task of the *yogic* intelligence Tulsidas has compared *sahus* and *sants* to the Triveni the confluence of the three sacred rivers Devotion, *bhakti*, he calls the Ganges and work, *karma*, the Jamuna Sarasvati, the hidden river, he equates with *brahmavidya*, knowledge of *brahaman* Thus he conveys to us the fact that *brahmavidya* is a hidden knowledge, a knowledge not evident to the eyes, like the river Sarasvati It is brought out into the open, made manifest and articulated by the *yogic* intelligence This *yogic* intelligence guides the *sadhaka* Its foundation, the basis of this yogic intelligence is knowledge of the essence *samkhya buddhi* A house cannot be built without a foundation and a foundation without a superstructure is useless and without meaning Fire is latent in a match, inarticulate When the match is struck the fire flashes out, becomes manifest An intelligence of fine penetration can perceive the fire while it is still latent It is visible to everybody when it bursts forth All become aware of its power *Samkhya*, the knowledge of the essence, and the *yogic* intelligence are related to each other in a similar way

The *yogic* intelligence first shows itself in the determination of duty Until duty has been determined no spiritual discipline can begin Once certainty in regard to duty has been reached the next step is concentration of one's energies in spiritual endeavour, *sadhana* To rely completely upon one's own efforts, unconcerned about the outcome, without a thought of reward, is known as *sadhana-nistha*, complete absorption in one's *sadhana* This is the second step The third step is taken when the *chitta*, inner being attains equilibrium and becomes tranquil Out of this state rises the condition known as *samadhi*, equanimity When *samadhi* becomes so stable that no distraction can disturb it, when it is unshakable and unchangeable, the Steadfast Wisdom is achieved One is a person of Steadfast Wisdom when he ceases to be influenced or disturbed by any diversion, anxiety, or even theological proposition, a person whose *samadhi* is unalterable, who is tranquil

There are, therefore, four steps in the practice of the art of living in the light of *samkhya* or the *yogic* intelligence (a) the determination of one's *sadhana*, (b) concentrated effort with no thought of reward, (c) equanimity or *samadhi* (d) consolidated *samadhi*, natural, unchanging, unshakable This is the Steadfast Wisdom The yogic intelligence leads us ultimately to the Steadfast Wisdom It was this statement which gave rise to Arjuna's question In order to know what the Steadfast Wisdom is like he asked Krisna 'What are the signs of the Steadfast Wisdom ? How does a person who has it speak ? How does he live ? How does he conduct himself ? Tell me all these things' In reply Krisna describes the Steadfast Wisdom and this description is the subject of our study

It is necessary for us to understand the meaning of the word *samadhi* before we can understand what Krisna says This is a word which gives rise to many grave errors The self-oblivion of meditation is commonly thought to be *samadhi* But this is *dhyana-samadhi* If to be in the condition called *samadhi* means not to be aware of anything but what one is meditating upon, there would be no occasion for Arjuna's question He asks how a person in this condition speaks and behaves Several commentators have, for this reason, divided their study of one who has the Steadfast Wisdom into two parts The first concerns itself with the conduct of a person in a state of *samadhi* and the second with his conduct

when not in a state of *samadhi* There is imagination in such a classification but also faulty judgment, for it overlooks the fact that the Steadfast Wisdom described in this part of the *Gita* is a different kind of *samadhi* The *samadhi* that rises and recedes is the *samadhi* of meditation, *dhyana samadhi* The *samadhi* of the Steadfast Wisdom is of a different kind, being the *samadhi* of realisation, *jnana-samadhi* It neither rises nor recedes 'No spell can bind one who has it'—this is the way in which it is described In other words it is a stable state, not a fluctuating one The *samadhi* of meditation, *dhyana-samadhi*, is fluctuating Though it may last for four or five days the possibility of its being dissipated is always present Sooner or later it abates *Jnana-samadhi* is not like this The *jnana-samadhi* of the Steadfast Wisdom is not subject to fluctuation, it is not objective On the contrary, it is reflective, subjective, enduring The word 'reflective' frightens people 'Oh' they exclaim 'that means sitting idly quiet' But this is not so To sit idly quiet is also to take part in cyclic activity, There is no movement of this kind in the Steadfast Wisdom It is, in all senses, unmoving, stable, reflective This does not meant that meditation plays no part in it A person possessing this wisdom will certainly meditate in his leisure or when considering some plan of service But meditation does not distinguish this wisdom It is known in the duration nature of the realisation which accompanies it Meditation is, like good works, an ingredient, but it is not inseparable from the condition any more than *karma-yoga* is

Samadhi has been commonly taken to mean the *samadhi* of meditation, because of the interpretation placed upon it by the *Yoga Sastra* of Patanjali But Patanjali does not regard the *samadhi* of meditation as the final achievement Patanjali's *sutras* are excellently arranged and well-founded The first three of the 195 are seminal They are to be doctrine of *yoga* what the first four of the *Brama-sutras* are to the latter The first discusses the *sastra* of *yoga* The second says that *yoga* is the name given to the means by which the outgoing of the consciousness, *citta*, is checked In the third there follows a discussion of the stabilisation of the soul in its inherent nature

These three lines concisely sum up the entire *sastra* *Samadhi* is not even mentioned *Yoga* is acquirable and it is described as the withdrawing of the outgoing tendencies of the consciousness

Samadhi, that is to say, the *samadhi* of meditation, is also a tendency, a propensity, and Patanjali speaks of using it as a means to the achievement of the *yoga* of the stilled senses or controlled consciousness The steps in its attainment are (a) *sraddha*, faith and reverence (b) *virya smrti*, recollection of heroism, (c) *samadhi*, and (d) *prajna*, wisdom To start with, there must be reverence or faith From it springs heroism, energy and enthusiasm This is followed by recollection, the recalling of the soul This recollection finds its fullest expression in enthralled meditation, the *samadhi* of meditation From this emerges *prajna*, wisdom, and I call wisdom *yoga* when it becomes fixed and enduring Patanjali states very plainly that these are the steps in the achievement of *yoga* He places *prajna*, wisdom, after *samadhi*, as the step which follows it And the term used for wisdom, *prajna*, is taken from the *Gita* In the verse preceding Arjuna's question Krisna tells him that he will achieve *yoga* when his *budhi*, intelligence, is permanently set in *samadhi* To Patanjali *yoga* is the final objective He speaks of *prajna*, wisdom, as a means of achieving it and indicates that *samadhi* is a means of attaining wisdom When *samadhi*, as meditation, merges into a natural, eternal and permanent state it is called *prajna* Thus the thought of the *Gita* is brought into accordance with the *sutras* of Patanjali

Intellectualism finds its supreme expression in the concept of the Steadfast Wisdom Intellect—the pure intelligence—is recognised as the colleague, the associate, of the feelings The intelligence that is free from the distorting influence of anger, hatred and so forth can really be of much assistance in the acquisition of knowledge A person says, 'Such and such a thing does not seems good to my way of thinking' 'Do not call the mind your own', says the Gita Forgo the adjective 'mine' and see what the intelligence in its pure state has to convey There is arrogance in the feeling behind 'my' and 'mine', there is distortion, subservience to *samskara*, bondage to circumstance Are you an egocentric intellectual or just an intellectual? When the intellect is free from distortion, bias, free from all qualifying titles, it becomes stable, fixed By this is meant that it becomes straight, upright, unshakable There is no movement, no variability In the tenth Section it is said, 'He attains unchangeable *yoga*' This means the same thing There must not be the slightest wavering of the intelligence, any hesitation or agitation, anxiety, uncertainty Such an intellect

will be useful Only a mind which has it can be called intelligent *Buddhi*, intelligence must be entirely straight, simple, direct There should be nothing crooked about it A spindle must be smooth and straight in order that fine thread may be spun with it It is only useful if it is free from all roughness and perfectly straight The same is true of the intellect The best symbol for an intelligence endowed with the Steadfast Wisdom is the spinning wheel A straight spindle is called 'true' There is a great deal appropriately implied in this word A spindle without any roughness, which is straight, is true, sure An intellect like it must be as true, as sure

A distinction must be made between the flaw of crookedness and the flow of unsteadiness Together they constitute a single flaw The symbol of the spindle will make this clear also A spindle which is not straight is not steady So it is with the intellect A straight intelligence is a steady intelligence, a sure mind Crookedness and unsteadiness, though in effect the same, must nevertheless be thought of separately Considering them closely we find that unsteadiness is a fault of the intellect and crookedness a fault of the mind The mind is, from one point of view, a part of the intellect. But we shall, for the convenience of study, take them separately The mind of a baby is entirely straight, open, direct, and a baby, therefore, learns very quickly Straightness is, for the acquisition of knowledge, the most important quality Without it sure and certain knowledge cannot be had The name Arjuna itself means 'the One-with-a-Straight-Mind'

The word *prajna*, wisdom, as used in the *Gita* is the carrier of special meaning *Buddhi*, intelligence or intellect, is a common word Intellect changes and grows with a man's mind It takes on the various colours of his imagination and feeling The intellect thus coloured, cannot reach any sure conclusion Only an intellect which is not subject to feeling and imagination, which is free from distortion, from sympathies and antipathies and the colouring of propensities, is helpful in the acquisition of knowledge and is, in itself, *prajna*, wisdom Wisdom, *prajna*, is impartial It fixes its attention upon the true nature of the thing contemplated and draws conclusions accordingly When the *buddhi* is subject to changing colouration many *buddhis* arise out of the one An intellect is compassionate when affected by compassion and when affected by hatred it becomes filled with animosity This type of

intelligence draws man in many directions, making him fearful, making him anxious, making him old. Such multiple *buddhis* are futile in the showing of the way. Pure intellect, wisdom, *prajna*, has no colour of its own and for that reason it, and only it, can arrive at correct conclusions. Pure intellect is a thermometer. A thermometer never has fever itself. It is for that reason that it can measure the fever of others.

Some have more and some less intelligence. This is not considered important. Emphasis is laid on the purity of the intelligence. A spark may be effective though small. It can burn a big pile of cotton whereas a piece of coal, even a large piece, will be smothered by it. The question of *buddhi*, intelligence, being more or less does not arise. A tiny spark of pure *buddhi*, a mere speck, is sufficient. The special nature of the power of the *buddhi*, intelligence, lies in just this. But this is not the case with physical force. Whether a man as thin as a palm can ever develop into a wrestler like Gama may be justly doubted. For a person of small intelligence to give the kind of leadership required in the administration of a state is not possible, but it is possible for such a person, even an uneducated person, to attain to the Steadfast Wisdom. A basketful of intelligence is not necessary for that. A spark of *prajna*, wisdom, is enough. Though weightier and more ample intelligence may do much work in the world and bring about many changes, the power to set the three worlds aflame with fire belongs only to the spark of *prajna*.

We have considered[2] Arjuna's question. And we have also tried to determine what *prajna*, wisdom, is and *samadhi*. Wisdom does not mean common sense. On the contrary, it is the intelligence which tends to analyse. This wisdom must be fixed, upright. This means it must be straight, sure. We have also seen that *samadhi* here does not mean the *samadhi* of meditation, *dhyana-samadhi*. We find it necessary here to study the word *samadhi* a little further. It is composed of three parts: *sam*, *a*, and the suffix *dha* as a root. The word *samadhana*, which means solution, fixity, has the same derivation. When one's consciousness has attained a state of fixity, found a solution, it has achieved *samadhi*. The word *samadhana* is also used to describe a balance, quality of weight. When the weights in a balance are equal, they are steady, in equilibrium, and said to be *samatula*, balanced. The scales are steady, equally weighted. If the consciousness attains a state as

need only of intelligence, *budhi* It is better not to have a heart of the kind described The heart must be assimilated into the mind Uncertainty alternate with certainty in an unstable flux with the heart Certainty is sometimes uppermost and sometimes uncertainty The heart is a bundle of needs, desires Certainty and uncertainty —our needs—should be ordered and controlled by the inspiration of the intelligence There should be no disagreement between the head and the heart There should be no conflict, no straining apart, one from the other The mind should speak and the heart obey The mind's work is to analyse The mind is the legislator, it makes the rules The work of the heart is to put the rules into practice, to enforce the laws, to act as the executive The heart ought not to usurp the powers of the mind or encroch upon its jurisdiction Let each do its own work Does the tongue do more than decide whether a piece of candy is really sweet or whether it is bitter, whether it is edible or inedible ? It is not the tongu's function to decide how many pieces of candy may be eaten It should not dare to concern itself with that problem The heart should follow the guidance of the mind By degrees it immerse itself entirely in the mind Desires are like wrappings around the heart Remove them one by one and the bundle will disappear entirely Thus it becomes possible to say that the heart has merged with the mind, lost itself, become one with the mind, in form, in feeling and in being This is the peal destruction of the heart To destroy the heart means to destroy the power of the heart It means that the heart identifies itself with and follows the guidance of the mind without any protest To give effect to analysis there is no need to destroy the power of the heart to obey, This power must be kept intact But desire must be rooted out The forgoing of all desire in this complete fashion constitutes the negative aspect of the interpretation of the Steadfast Wisdom

Now let us consider its affirmative aspect, the self-containment of inner contentment This is the mark of acceptance The Steadfast Wisdom is content The inner vision gives it more satisfaction than any outward show. And in truth, what we behold with our inner eye is more pleasing and more beautiful to the sight than anything we behold externally A poet's description of what he sees is very much more delightful than the actual thing he describes The ideal inner world of poet is more delightful than the actual external reality

The ideal character of the inner vision is clearly shown in the signs which are recognised as indicating the acceptance of the Steadfast Wisdom This wisdom is revealed it its entirety if the two characteristics given herein are present One who has achieved this wisdom forgoes all desire and the spiring of contentment rises within him No happiness is to be found in the bundle of desires He must relise this from the outset Surely it is worth our while to consider whether any real pleasure or permanence is to be found in desire, it is not ? Experience does not show that either peace, stability or refreshing coolness is to be found in desire On the contrary desires unsettle the heart and make it restless This restlessness fills us with anxiety, sets fires alight There is no reason to fear that we shall lose the refreshment of coolness with the passing of desire Any stability that desire may appear to have is not more than a semblance of true stability The satisfaction of a desire does bring happiness because, to put it in another way, the desire is eliminated To fulfil a desire is one way of getting rid of it A little thought will show that happiness is found, not in the desire itself, but in freedom from it It is for this reason that we say that two signs of the Steadfast Wisdom are (i) the complete foregoing of desire, and (ii) self-contained contentment

These two signs are not merely the affirmative and negative aspects of the Steadfast Wisdom They convey other meanings also One is the primary and the other the secondary aspect of reality To forgo all desire is the disciplinary aspect of the Steadfast Wisdom The second sign, inner contentment, results from this primary discipline The first is preliminary and the second the sequel, the product of the discipline

Bahya-sparsesu asaktatma vindatyatmani yatsukham

'When one's consciousness is free from outward things it becomes possible to understand what happiness there is within'—the *Gita* describes this state in these words Elsewhere it says that as the inner vision grows the waters of desire dry up proportionately This means that *atmadarsana*, the cultivation of the inner vision, constancy, is the spiritual discipline which brings about the destruction of desire Self-contentment therefore appears to be the most fundamental quality Contentment of spirit is not visible to the eye What can be seen is the foregoing of desire For a

person not have any desires is the outward sign of inner contentment We may therefore call it the fruit of contentment To argue about which of these two indications appears first is meaningless The loss of desire and the inner vision are both the cause and result of cash other

We have spoken of the uprooting of desire, referring to them as though they are so many thorny weeds A thorn pricks even though it is made of gold And a knife can kill, even though it be a golden knife And so the *Gita* concludes that, one and all, desires must be eliminated without exception The *Gita* is, however, cited as raising no objection to the retention of a certain type of desire The following line is produced as proof

Dharmaviruddho bhutesu kamosmi, Bharatarsabha

Let us, therefore, consider the matter carefully There is actually nothing contradictory in these two statements One indicates the state of stability to which we are to aspire The second indicates the manner in which desires are to be removed Four methods are commonly used They are (i) *vyapaka-prakriya* or diffusion, (ii) *ekagra-prakriya* or concentration, (iii) *suksma-prakriya* or refinement, and (iv) *visuddha-prakiya* or purification

DIFFUSION

Desires are personal, individual A desire is given a general, a social, application in order to destroy it This is the way of *karma yoga* Suppose, for instance, a gentleman living in a certain village wishes to educate his son He can found a school in the village He can, in arranging for the education of his son, arrange to educate other boys in the village also His desire is thus given a social character Let me give an example out of the past When a person felt a desire to eat meat he was directed to hold a *yajna* In a *yajna*, the person who holds it may eat what remains when everyone else has been given his fill Women follow the same practice in their homes Housewives eat what is left after everybody else has been fed Little but the labour often fails to their lot But their personal desire is, in this way, enlarged to include the welfare of the whole family It is dissipated through the *karma* of duty By this method desire is progressively enlarged, its scope made more and

more inclusive and in the process of expansion it is thinned out to nullity

CONCENTRATION

Compare the desires in your heart and determine which of them is the strongest Then concentrate upon it, letting all the others go Nothing else should occupy your mind Suppose, for instance, that among a scholar's many desires is the desire to study the *Veda* He finds that this is stronger than the others He will then go to live at the house of his *guru* and study, nourishing himself with whatever food his *guru* may give him He may, as a result, lose all taste for a certain type of food, say, sweets The recognition and acceptance of a single desire as a fixed resolve and the organisation of one's entire life around it, is the method used by *dhyana yoga* All students in whom the desire for knowledge is keen, make use of it They subordinate all other desires to the desire to learn and undergo a great deal of hardship in order to fulfil it

sukharthinah kuto vidya kuto vidyarthinah sukham

'Where will those who crave happiness find knowledge ? Where will those who seek knowledge find happiness ?' wrote Vyasa When we announce that happiness, convenience and knowledge are all simultaneously provided in our students' hostels we take an attitude diametrically opposed to this It is a mistaken attitude If one thinks too much of happiness one cannot put one's mind on one's study Therefore, examine your desires, determine which is the strongest, and concentrate all your energies on its fulfilment This is what the scientists who conduct modern materialistic experiments do They give their entire attention to the experiment in hand, eliminating all other considerations This is called *dhyana yoga* the *yoga* of meditation Centre your attention upon one desire, a desire chosen because of its strength, and let all other desires go Last of all you will be able to let go of the central one For when concentration is completely achieved you will no longer require it either and thus can set yourself free from it,

REFINEMENT

This is the method by which crude and coarse desires are supplanted by progressively finer ones You may, for instance, love clothes and like to be well dressed Dress up your inner rather than your outer self Decorate your mind Cultivate wit. Seek new knowledge Learn new arts This enrichment of the inner self is much less vulgar than the decoration of the body. It is more refined There is an enrichment, a taste, even more refined still —that of decking the heart with virtues. More fragrant than the perfume which scents the body is the fragrance of a mind animated by a keen intelligence More fragrant still is the scent of a heart endowed with all the virtues See how my loving mother has dressed me !' cries Namadeva at the beginning of one of his poems A delightful description follows It is a description of the clothing of the inner self It is decked out in finery as a doting mother decks her child in beautiful clothes Inner adornment adds more to the beauty of life than any outer adornment can Forgo the coarse decoration of the body and turn your attention to the finer adornment of the soul Happiness lies, not in desire, but in the satisfaction of desire A coarse desire is difficult to satisfy, for in order to do so outer objects must be obtained A finer desire is less difficult to satisfy, for all that is required is available within oneself In this way a desire, turned inwards, subtilized and made subjective, can be satisfied and through being satisfied, eliminated This is the method followed by *jnana yoga*, the way of knowledge

PURIFICATION

In this method no distinction is made between personal, individual desires and social desires or between outer and inner desires, find of coarse We differentiate only between desires that are good and desires that are evil Keep the good and get rid of the bad Eat mangoes when you crave candy Candy may be harmful and the eating of it may also, enhance your craving for indulgence Mangoes are good for health and the act of substituting them for candy may also add to your pleasure in natural goodness In this method we do not speak of the destruction of desire from the outset We merely suggest that good desires be substituted for evil ones Examine your desires

ane determine for yourself, with the help of your own intelligence, which are good and which bad Our own opinion is proof enough for us To determine the nature of some desires the assistance of science can be taken But with or without the help of science, the person who feels a desire must find out for himself whether it is beneficial to him or not. The mind is gradually purified by the elimination of bad desires through the process of replacing them by good ones A bad desire is eliminated when a good one is put in its place The satisfaction of the good desire does away with it Eventually therefore no desires at all are left This is the method of destroying desire by purification

Of these four methods of eliminating desire the last, the method of purification, is the safest, the surest Therefore, it is best This method is followed in *bhakti yoga*, the way of devotion Though other methods give great strength they also involve danger In the method of diffusion a desire is expanded from the individual to the community What if the desire itself be evil? If a person craves drink, he is, according to this method, obliged to open a drinking club for the public That will bring about not only his own downfall but a social evil A desire is not purified merely by extension The same danger is inherent in the method of concentration Ruin results if the desire upon which a person concentrates all his energies is an evil desire The concentration of one's consciousness is the subject of the *yoga sastra* Patanjali suggests that before concentration is begun the art of self-control should be practised Otherwise a calamity may ensue The *yoga* of meditation can bring disaster instead of liberation In both socialisation and intensification (concentration) there is power, strength, great forcefulness But this power can turn men into devils Even the method of refinement is not without danger The refinement of a desire does not necessarily make it pure The most terrible consequences may result if a desire centres upon another person and is indulged in a disembodied form Therefore the method of purification which is followed in *bhakti yoga* is the least dangerous It is for this reason that Tulasidasa wrote

Bhagati sutantra avalamba na ana

Bhakti is self-sufficient It has no need of assistance from

anything *Bhakti*, devotion, is required in order to avoid the dangers associated with all the other three methods, but *bhakti* itself does not require the assistance of any of them. Other methods develop strength, it is true, but they also involve danger. Strength on the one hand and safety on the other. There is a difference between strength and devotion, *bhakti*. *Bhakti* without strength may be weak but it will not be evil or calamitous. Strength without *bhakti* can, on the contrary, invoke calamity. *Bhakti* will never, in any circumstances, work harm. Therefore, the method of destroying desire by purification, the method followed in *bhakti yoga*, is from every point of view desirable and safe.

Dharmviruddho bhutesu kamosmi

'I am the desire for good which animates all creatures.' These lines make this quite plain.

The meaning of the Steadfast Wisdom has been fully explained.[3] In the three years which follow a persuasive description of its implications is given. In the first verse the description is psychological.

Duhkesu anudvignamandh sukhesu vigatasprhah,
Vitaragabhayakrodhah sthitadhir munirucyate

A person is described as possessing a steady mind when sorrow does not disturb him nor happiness elate him, who neither fears nor hates anything he does not like.

The pivotal word *'ucyate'* is present here also, but no comment is called for as the interpretation has already been given. We have been told of the need to root out all desires. This is not an easy thing to do. Therefore this verse speaks of the less difficult attributes of the Steadfast Wisdom. One should not allow the heart to be perturbed by unpleasantness and sorrow. To be perturbed means to be frightened, to be irritated or to be overcome with anxiety. This meaning is inherent in the word *'udvega'*. *'ut'* means 'up' and *'vega'* means 'movement'. One should avoid the plight of oxen going uphill, the straining, the suffering. Sorrow must be borne with patience. It must not force us to our knees. Joy, like grief, must be faced cautiously,

Yah sarvatra anabhisnehas tattatprapya subhasubham,
Nabhinandati na dvesti tasya prajna pratisthita

His mind is steady who is free of attachment, who is not pleasurably excited by advantageous gains nor moved to hatred by disadvantageous losses The feelings should not be allowed to cling to anything Do not set your heart on anything Do not let it fasten itself on anything or build for itself a home A man's heart is usually set on something For one it will be books, for another agriculture In the preceding verse we are admonished not to grieve when losses come to us nor to exult over our gains In this verse an easier method is shown to us We have not been told not to take pleasure in happiness We have only been told not to let it overwhelm us to the point of self forgetfulness, not to exult in it, not to congratulate ourselves overmuch Take pleasure in happiness by all means but do not clap your hands and shout aloud It is nice when a child is born Be pleased but do not distribute sweetmeats It is nice to get married There is no objection whatsoever But do not engage a band Is there no more than this here ? Similarly one feels badly when bad things happen There is nothing wrong in that Feel badly But do not give way to remorse or grief Do not allow it to affect your mind Deep emotional disturbance often leaves its mark on the mind The mind must be kept secure, the intelligence unobstructed Canakya said, 'If I must lose everything I shall accept the loss But let my mind remain unaffected,' It is thus that a *karma yogi* conducts himself in practical affairs Nor is it difficult to do this if there is any depth at all to the feelings No effort to control a man's feelings will be of any avail whatsoever if they are no deeper than a monkey's Monkeys chatter when they are happy and grind their teeth when they are angry Let us not be like them If your feelings are at all deep this method of controlling them will not be difficult

To make the idea of control more explicit the example of a tortoise is cited in the next verse

Yada samharate cayam kurmanganiva sarvasah,
Indriyani indriyarthebhyas tasya prajna pratisthita

As a tortoise draws his limbs within his shell at the first sign of danger, man protects the tranquility of his mind by withdrawing

his senses from worldly objects

Pull your senses away from wordly things the way a tortoise pulls its appendages into its shell at the first indication of danger At other times it puts them out and moves about A man also, when he finds himself in a dangerous situation, should withdraw into himself and thus shield his senses At other times, when they can be used to his benefit, he can release his senses and let them move about This method is an even easier one Come away from a place that seems dangerous to you Let your senses range freely when there is no apprehension of danger What can be simpler? Even an animal understands it This is why a tortoise is chosen to illustrate it The *Gita* argues that is even a creature like the tortoise can protect itself in this manner can a man not do so

As here described this appears easy but it is, for us, difficult It depends upon habit formation If a small child is trained in this way from the beginning the teaching of the *Gita* becomes a part of his nature, a part of him It is merely a matter of habit Some think that the teaching of the *Gita* goes against nature That is not at all the case The natural tastes of a small child are pure We force him to develop a liking for many things by making him sample them We inculcate in him artificial and unnatural tastes Things which are naturally pleasing to a small child are to be preferred, says the *Gita* Do them We spoil the tastes of children by giving them wrong training from the beginning This has to be corrected later by contradictory instruction It seems difficult to control our senses only because they have been corrupted in the first instance by bad teaching If good habits are formed from the start the regulation of our senses becomes easy 'The nature of my senses is such', writes Jnanadeva, 'that my eyes do not turn to see what should not be seen, nor my ears turn to hear what should not be heard' Why should this seem difficult? If I see a fire burning must I put my hand in it? If, for any reason, it becomes necessary for me to put my hand in it I shall think a long time about doing so first and prepare myself When we know for certain where danger lies our senses refuse to approach it of their own accord Normally it should appear very difficult to make our senses move about freely in a dangerous place Bad instruction has given rise to the opposite state of affairs The unnatural and difficult seem to us

simple and natural What can the *Gita* do about it? The *Gita* has shown us a way which, from its point of view, is easy even for a child to follow There can be no doubt that, given normal and natural social conditions, the conquest of the senses within its fold ought not to be difficult

Two methods of sense control are commonly recommended, restraint or sublimation and repression or suppression Let us consider both of them The senses can be suppressed only for short periods of time To master them requires a lifelong effort, a discipline comprising the whole of life Suppose, for instance, I like to eat sweets It is not wrong to eat sweets But to indulge my craving to excess is bad Therefore I stop eating them entirely for a time. The need for my doing so is the need to establish a habit, to form my own nature in a way that will enable me to control my own tastes To establish my control, to assert my master, I suppress my senses for a time It is not a sin to eat sweets It may even, in a certain state of health, become necessary to eat them But in order to maintain my control over my pleasure in eating sweets I discontinue eating them totally for a time Afterwards I resume eating them but cautiously, in due measure This is what I mean by self-control Another example is silence Silence is adopted for a fixed length of time in order to facilitate *sadhana* Sweet speech is a permanent device Similarly, fasting is an occasional practice while moderate eating is a permanent one People can be judged from these things A Gujarati proverb runs, 'Men are tested at the dining table and in bed' All the weaknesses of human nature are revealed when men sit down to dine or take to bed with some illness It is easier to overeat and even to fast than it is for men to habitually limit the amount of food they take They prefer the extremes to the formation of the habit of moderation The formation of the habit of moderation is more difficult for them than taking the consequences of going to extremes Self-control means holding the senses to the way of moderation In order to maintain that control the senses have, on occasion, to be forced to the extreme of repression The value of repression is obvious but it is not something that is practised daily

Repression is occasional and control permanent The difference between the two which we have pointed out here is a difference of degree, of intensity, resulting from an inner condition

Viewed objectively it will be seen that repression, like control, can have a permanent effect Fasting is, as we have said, occasional while moderate eating is a daily habit But suppose a person develops the habit of having his meals at a fixed time every day Such a habit is beneficial He will not eat anything offered to him at any other time. This is repression but, obviously, it is a permanent, not an occasional, condition The same is true with regard to silence Ordinarily silence is a temporary condition but occasions to withold speech, repress the urge to say something, occur daily Not to say what we feel like saying, not to give the answer we wish to give, to people who speak to us is often necessary We are, in fact, forced to practise both control and repression every single day The difference between them, therefore, is merely a difference of degree They are actually the same They have a common factor—the discipline of the self Once this difference, the difference between control and repression, is understood we can forget it But the word for repression, '*nigraha*', needs further elucidation There is no suggestion of compulsion in it, is there ? One suspects there is But the phrase 'suppression of the senses' was not intended to mean compulsion Meaning does not adhere unalterably to a word Many derive their meaning from the manner in which they are used

The description of the chief characteristics of the Steadfast Wisdom and its three subsidiary attributes is now complete In the following verses the simpler means of controlling the senses is explained in greater detail The *Gita* considers this control so important that it refers to it again and again The theological and scientific aspects of this must both be discussed in detail Science answers the interrogative 'How ?' and theology answers the interrogative 'Why ?' How we can master our senses and why we should do so, that is to say, in what manner this mastery is related to the Steadfast Wisdom we shall consider in the next issue

The features which characterize the Steadfast Wisdom have been fully set forth in the first four verses[4] Now we must turn our attention to the science and epistemology of sense suppression, The science was dealt with in the first three verses The methods given are the comparatively easy ones First we have been advised to forgo desire, secondly, not to permit the consequences of desire,

that is, not to allow desire to grow into hunger, fear and anger, and thirdly, in the event of consequences appearing in spite of our efforts, to keep them under control and to prevent them from affecting the mind Fourthly, we are advised to withdraw our senses, not to allow them to wander about The four categories into which these methods have been classified indicate how spiritual discipline is to be begun The fourth method, the withdrawal of the senses, is described as the simplest The Steadfast Wisdom cannot be attained before the last and highest step in *sadhana* is reached No one should make the mistake of supposing that it can For sense control in itself, maintained through restraint and suppression, is not enough to win his Wisdom Not even to the extent of the control? No, for this control does not suffice to give complete mastery of the senses It does, however, make it possible for us to root desire completely out of our inner selves For the strength that comes with the realisation that our senses will behave as we wish them to behave enables us to go farther and eliminate desire altogether This is necessary The senses are not, in my opinion, completely mastered until this has been accomplished To me sense control is as subtle as that The idea is formulated in one verse It is the beginning of the science of sense suppression

Visaya vinivartante niraharasya dehinah,
Rasavarjam raso'pyasya param drstva nivartate

'The objects of sense turn away from the embodied soul who abstains from feeding on them but the taste for them remains Even the taste turns away when the Supreme is seen '

The desire to enjoy objects of sense remains after these objects themselves have departed They depart from one who abstains from indulging his appetite for them But once the Supreme has been seen desire also departs This is the meaning of this verse Let us not imagine that we have mastered the senses when we have succeeded in pulling them away from objects of sense By abstention is meant here not only the restraint of the tongue but of appetite in all its forms, in its widest sense The word 'apetite' is used with a symbolic meaning The first step in our *sadhana* is the control of the desire to savour things of the senses It is not the end but the beginning, For by the suppression of our external

senses we win the strength and the fitness which enable us to cast out all desirs from our inner selves Real discipline, inner discipline, starts at this point Our *sadhana* will only come to an end when our inner appetites, all pleasure in flavour, have become completely dessicated The strength for this is developed through the practice of the control of the outer senses That is why the *Gita* has included the control of the outer senses among the distinguishing features of the Steadfast Wisdom

To the epistemologist it is sufficient to say 'Forgo all desire' Nothing need be added The exposition of the Steadfast Wisdom opens, therefore, in epistemological language, But the ways of a teacher differ from those of an epistemologist A teacher keeps the preparation and ability of his pupil in mind when he addresses him He tells the pupil plainly that he will not get his diploma until his course of study is completed but at the same time he instructs him daily That is to say he guides the pupil with simple lessons and a compassionate concern for his welfare so that the pupil is encouraged to hope and persevere while at the same time he maintains the dignity of the doctrine The *Gita* is permeated with this compassionate concern The example of the tortoise is the first lesson When one lesson has been mastered a new one is taken up Step by step the *Gita* guides us Saints and *sadhakas*, filled with concern for us, have ever told us that if a person calls upon God just once in full devotion he attains a vision of liberation The direction of his life is changed He turns to God That does not mean he has reached his destination But hope grows when a man knows where he is going The task of the teacher, the *guru*, is to encourage him to hope more and more until he attains his goal

The chief thing is that we must not relax our efforts until all desire has dried out of our hearts Why so long ? Some may protest that the suppression of our outer senses for such and extended period of time will result in hypocrisy This argument will entangle those bent on self-destruction Whether a *sadhaka* is hypocritical or not, whether his *sadhana* is false or genuine, is immediately apparent for he must keep on trying until he has attained his end Some disparity between his conduct and his thoughts will inevitably develop His mind may wander when he sits down to pray It may be said, 'He does not really pray He is only pretending ' Only a *sadhaka* can be accused of pretending

to pray in order to impress people But he does not do that He does not intend to deceive so why should he be accused of doing so ? Some have tried to interpret this verse of the *Gita* as meaning that it is hypocritical to suppress the outward senses until the mind has been brought under control But that is not correct It might have been possible to interpret it that way if the verse had read *rasas tvasya parath drstva nivartate* But '*raso'pi*' is written here The importance of maintaining control over the external senses is stressed by the word '*api*' which qualifies the word '*rasa*' Implied also here is the idea that control of the external senses is not sufficient by itself and desire must be uprooted altogether The effort to maintain control of the external senses until desire is entirely eliminated may fail, may prove futile But it is not charlatanism The control of the senses has two aspects, a rough or crude aspect and a subtile, discerning aspect Both kinds of control must be practised if we are to arrive finally at the basic definition of the Steadfast Wisdom

The finer, more subtle control of the senses is not accomplished until all desire has disappeared How can it be done ? The answer is that this is brought about by a vision of the *atman*, of the Supreme, the *para-tattva* *Para-tattva* means the doctrine of *para*, the Other, that which is the farthest from us Actually it is the doctrine not of the Other, the most distant, but of the closest, of that which is nearest Not *para-tattva* but *sva-tattva* The idea commonly held is opposed to this The reason for the currency of the erroneous concept is our faulty reckoning We begin our computations from the physical plane, the body, the flesh The body is the most external part of us Yet we think of it is being the most intimate, the closest part ! Next comes the heart, the natural disposition After that the *buddhi* the intelligence And after the *buddhi* we place the *atman*, the soul In consequence of such a reversed reckoning what is closest to us becomes the furthest removed To *Gita* itself points this out in the following line *indriyani paranyahuh indriyebhyah param manah* Here the word '*para*' is used in the sense of supreme' and 'best', most 'ineflable' The *atman* is these things Until we have beheld the *atman* the mastery of the senses is not perfect That is to say, we have been led right back to the first verse

At this point someone usually protests 'We have been roundly cheated with hopes of simpler methods of spiritual

discipline! We have been reduced with a sweetment only to find a rod Inner desire cannot be done away with so easily How are we to go about it?' The way we are to go about it is now described Before he proceeds, however, Krisna answers the objectors

> Yatato hyapi kaunteya purusasya vipascitah,
> Indriyani pramathini haranti prasabham manah

'Even though a man may ever strive and be ever so discerning, O son of Kunti, his impetuous senses may carry off his mind by force' This means that the senses are capable of leading astray even the most conscientious and diligent of men Manu has a saying with similar implications Many commentators take it to mean exactly the same thing

> Matra svasra duhitra va na viviktasano bhavet,
> Balavan indriya-grama, vidvamsamapi karsati

This is what Manu says It means 'The senses are powerful Therefore, be careful even with your mother, your sister and your daughter Given the opportunity the senses carry away even the learned'

What Manu says is not, however, exactly what the *Gita* says Manu instructs common men how to conduct themselves, indicating certain social limits of behaviour According to his own insight and in the light of prevailing conditions he lays down a safe rule of conduct for general use He says in effect that a man should not trust himself beyond a certain point It can by no means be assumed that he will always be able to control himself The approach in the *Gita* is metaphysical What it writes is for *sadhakas* There is no trace of mistrust or doubt The *Gita* does not say that the *sadhaka* is incapable of controlling his external senses The ability to control them, to pull them away from objects of sense, is assumed The *Gita* acknowledges that the senses can be withheld from objects of sense at will Moreover, it insists upon the necessity of doing this Manu does not expect so much He is content to admonish the common man to be careful The *Gita* has a different purpose in view It presents the metaphysical proposition that the senses, even after they have been

withdrawn from the outward objects of sense, turn upon us and harass our hearts and minds They try to fasten upon our thoughts This sometimes is the cause of a mental indulgence which takes place even against our will Sense control, in the more subtle sense, is not possible in such circumstances

This happens even to those who watch their thoughts with the utmost care The word '*api*' must be read into the verse in two places *Yatato hyapi vipascitah api*' The word *vipascit*' is formed of '*vipah*' and '*cit*', '*Vipah*' is the second number form of '*vip*'. '*Vip*' is the root of the word for wisdom '*Vipra*' is a similar word '*Vip*' means one who is wise '*Vipascit*' means one who is wise with a great wisdom Even for such a one the mastery of the subtle senses is a difficult spiritual discipline. For these senses attempt to lead even his thoughts and feelings astray This is what the *Gita* wishes to tell us here

Man has two strengths, the strength of knowledge and the strength of endurance There is no third I have availed myself of both these and found that, in spite of them, the senses are able to insert themselves into our feelings and wax strong. How hard it is to manage them ! By a wise and careful man we mean a man armed with both knowledge and endurance At the beginning of the Second Chapter such a man is described as a '*dhira*' The word '*dhira*' is used in two senses, '*Dhi*' means intelligence and '*dhira*' means one who is intelligent, wise But knowledge by itself does not enable a man to succeed in his spiritual *sadhana* A man may be wise and yet be unable to survive He connot continue in that condition Man has to endure unending trials, put up with tribulation and win through Is knowledge enough ? It is difficult to say so The remark of a certain scientist has become famous He was made to suffer terribly because he had declared that the earth revolves 'Bring me your paper', he cried, 'I shall sign what you want me to sign' He was asked to sign a statement that the earth does not revolve Un-bearable pain forced him to comply. When the paper was actually presented to him he said, ' What can I do ? Even though I deny it the earth revolves, revolves, revolves !' Knowledge must be reinforced by the power to endure Endurance is as necessary as intelligence This meaning is also implicit in the word '*dhira*' In order to obtain it we must trace the origin of the word to the root '*dhr*' '*Dhira*' means '*dhrtiman*', one who is patient, endurin The *Gita* uses it in both of its meanings

We have seen that what the *Gita* tells us is different from what Manu says It will be profitable for us to clarify the distinction further The heart is situated midway between the mind and the senses Who would master the senses must master the heart also The heart is not amenable by nature The *Gita* advises us to restrain the senses first As the senses are mastered the heart is not mastered to the same extent as a matter of course The contrary is the case, for the senses, as they are detached from outward objects, tend to turn inwards and assail the heart The *sadhaka* knows this He separates himself from his impulses He knows that his feelings are being attacked He neither surrenders nor cooperates The language used in the *Gita* makes this clear The senses strongly assail the heart of the *sadhaka* and seek to draw it after them, says the *Gita* *haranti prasabham manah* The heart of the *sadhaka* is swayed but not the *sadhaka* himself Manu tells us that 'the senses in their excitement sway the sage, they draw after them not only his heart but the man himself" *vidvamsamapi karsati* The senses turn to attack the heart as they are brought under control A way has to be found to stop them This is difficult even for a sage and for the *sadhaka* this period of transition is a time of great danger and struggle The impulses run after objects of sense The *sadhaka* gives them no encouragement To check them he exerts himself to reach a state so stable that his heart will cease to be attracted by them If all his knowledge and all his striving are of no avail what can he do? The answer is given in the verse which follows

Tani sarvani samyamya yukta asita matparah,
Vase hi yasya indriyani tasya prajna pratishita

'*Tani savvani samyamya matparah asita* is to be construed thus '*yukta san tani sarvani samyamya matyarah asita*' Control all your senses judiciously and consecrate yourself to God' The senses can and must be mastered with knowledge and perseverance The necessity and the urgency of controlling them must be realised Trust to the way of self-control in order to do it Control and repression are both contained in one word—'*nirodha*', restraint The *Gita* says that knowledge and perseverance give us the strength required to restrain the senses But even after one has gained control over the senses by these rather crude means, his mastery

is not secure until he has likewise won control over his emotional impulses Human strength is not equal to the task of mastering the human heart Here comes in faith, *bhakti*

When a man reaches the limit of his human powers, hesitates and thinks of abandoning the field of battle, the need for faith becomes acute Faith only finds entrance where effort is unflagging and exertion sustained Our human powers, the powers that God has given us, find their last and supreme expression in faith and humility, culminating in these two virtues The strength in us is the divine strength of Krisna, the strength of God He bestows it upon us at the beginning, giving us a part and retaining a part as reserve We mistake this God-given power for our own It is not ours but God's And the part that God holds in reserve for us belongs, conversely, to us and is ours When we have fully utilised the share given us at the start, spending it entirely, we win the right to ask for the remainder

If we do not utilise to their full extent the powers that we have, how can God give us the remainder ? A father gives his son ten thousand rupees to start a business If the son does not make use of the ten thousand why should his fater give him a lakh more his father finds that the ten thousand has been used to the best purpose he says, 'The rest is yours !' Our relationship with God is similar He is prepared to give us the strength He holds in reserve for us All that He requires is proof of the urgency of our need God is gratified when a person is able to show that he has used up all his own resources and requires more 'This is the kind of enterprising devotee I like', He says Never yet in the world, however, has there been a task to accomplish which the whole of God's strength has been needed Man easily obtains from God as much strength as he needs and is able to use well A time never comes when a man can despair or surrender When he has used to the full all the powers he has been given he will receive more and greater ones Why should God give him more powers if he asks God for them before he has used what he has to their full extent ? God does not need to make a show of His work What of His handi-work is still unfinished ? His Creation is complete He is eager to add to *your* glory, to *your* achievement Keep on trying, applying all your powers to your chosen task When you find that you can do no more by your own effort turn to God. He will give you the additional powers you need,

In discussions of the *bhakti marga* or the way of faith, it is the custom to cite the example of an elephant The story is of an elephant which tried to conquer by its own strength alone and God therefore refrained from coming to its assistance The elephant was proud of its strength and because of its pride God could not help it until its pride was destroyed This is but right Imagine an elephant that is not proud of its strength and imagine, further, that it prays to God for assistance constantly while refusing to do anything to help itself This refusal is a kind of inverse pride Why should it not do what it can with the powers that it has ? Are these powers its own ? Not at all They are God's It is not pride to use the strength one has in the consciousness that this strength is God's Not to so us it does show pride It shows lack of faith It shows slothfulness You are hoarding powers that are not yours and, at the same time, asking for more Use the strength that you have, with humility, for it belongs to God, and ask for more only when you have exhausted it If you make the fullest and best use of what you have God will give you what you have not

Here we find, in the final analysis, dependence, dependence upon God Some may exclaim that this is, once again, subjugation To think so is wrong Subjugation begins when one's own powers end It puts an end to them if you think of this dependence as subjugation To trust in the power of God is not to subjugate oneself It can become subjugation only if God is thought of a stranger God is not a stranger Suppose you divide a coat pocket into two halves, an inner and an outer, and put money in both halves When the money in the outer half is spent you take money from the inner half Both halves of the pocket are yours Or suppose that you keep some of your money in your trunk and some in the bank This situation is similar God and you are two aspects of the same consciousness You are a part God is the whole The consciousness of both is the same It follows that His strength is also your strength And so it is that to ask for and accept assistance from God is not subjugation

Faith begins where our own efforts to master our hearts fail. Not until then does the need for it become acute When a person can do no more by himself he grows anxious for help Faith is born of this anxiety There is no anxiety until this point is

reached Therefore, faith is not present There may be trust Win control over your senses by the use of the powers that are yours And when these senses, detached from external objects, turn to assail you inwardly, attacking your heart, ask for the help of God in combating them To seek the help of God in such a pure and delicate task is called an act of devotion To seek the help of God in our common daily affairs has become a habit We mistake such ignorant behaviour for devotion. It is not so. What sort of devotion is it to pray to God for help in passing an examination? It is childishness Unmanly Do you ask for God's help because your crop has not been good? As if God has not given you the power to solve all such problems! These are not matters in which we can seek God's help It is not seemly to seek his assistance in relation to worldly things which we desire to accomplish

Both parties to a war pray to God for victory God has a will of His own It is not possible for Him to give victory to both sides Yet I regard Him as subject to my will I want Him to use His divine powers to bring about what I want To make His will my will constitutes an act of devotion I do the opposite I want to win I have made up my mind in advance All I want God to do is to grant me victory My prayer ought to be framed as follows 'May I win if my cause is a right and just cause If it is not, let me lose To lose will cleanse me inwardly' In the *Mahabharata* there is the following story Queen Gandhari, out of sympathy with her blind husband, Dhrtarastra, had her eyes bound Her son, Duryodhana, came to take his leave of her when he went to war She blessed him, saying, 'May you win if your cause is a true and righteous cause!' Here we have a genuine prayer Why should you pray, 'God, please restore to me what I have lost!' Your prayer should be, 'Whether what I have lost is restored to me or not, may I not lose my peace of mind!' When a child is ill people pray, 'May the child not die!' Good! But what kind of a prayer is that? All must die sooner or later, this is a known fact If one must pray for a child's life, pray that he may be spared *now* and add that you do not object if he dies at some other time, say, on the 28th Your petition to God should be as precise as that Who prays in such a fashion? Pray that the child may be spared mental and physical suffering at the time of his death.

We make up our minds as to what is good for us in advance and then ask God to give us what we want That is to say, we treat God as if He is the servant of our understanding A story in the *Upanisads* relates how a certain person with whom God was pleased was tested 'Ask a boon !' the Lord said to him The man answered, 'What do I know about a boon ? Do I know what is good for me ? You know all things Grant me what is good for me !' Thus was the man tested and not found wanting He did not try to impose his own will upon God It is fortunate for me that God is not prepared to act as I want Him to act And when, on occasion, He does so it is probable that He wishes to teach me the consequences of intellectual pride, of intoxication with my own will We accept the evidence of our own understanding as conclusive and expect God also to accept it That is to say, we regard God as a menial who is obliged to carry out our orders We admit that He is powerful But He is, nevertheless, our servant We are the judges, the assessors It is we who are the dispensers of fate and He is merely the sheriff or, say, the Sub-divisional Magistrate The attempt to use God as an instrument of our will, a lifeless agent, is a sign of pride and it also shows rigidity There is cynicism in this attitude to God insolence This element of rigidity, a certain hardening, has, in the name of faith, entered into all religions It does not show faith to seek the help of God in accomplishing what we desire. Over and over again the *Gita* strikes out at activity inspired by desire It is as if the *Gita* has a vendetta with such activity

But here and there the *Gita*, moved perhaps by compassion, does say that if a person calls upon God with complete devotion his prayer may be granted although he prays out of desire And his prayer is fulfilled But this is exceptional It is not the rule One who turns to God out of passionate desire is given hope The rule is that even one who prays for what is good must do so dispassionately Passionate prayer is not vindicated or endorsed by the above concession What is here expressed is the feeling that it is much better for a person to turn wholly to God even though he does it out of desire There is stupidity in passion and an apprehension of degradation But there is scope for progress if whole-heartedness is present It is possible to eliminate the passion If you concentrate your whole being in an ardent prayer to God your heart can be cleansed by His touch Ordinarily people

do not pray whole-heartedly when they pray for something they want They neither believe nor disbelieve whole-heartedly When they are ill they fall at the feet of doctors and at the same time invite Brahmins to recite prayers Their faith is wavering, impotent The weakness of men's faith sends them to perdition Passion belongs to a lower level of existence, undoubtedly, but it whole becomes tolerable when whole-hearted devotion is joined to it, for passion then becomes a purifying agent What we must really achieve is the fusion of whole-heartedness with dispassionatedness.

The senses must be controlled, however, crudely, by the *sadhaka* with the powers he has at his disposal The senses can be controlled but not mastered by these powers All hankering after objects of sense must pass away from the heart and mind But when the heart and mind are assailed by senses which are turning inwards, knowledge and endurance, as we have seen, are inadequate Knowledge and endurance are called, alternatively, conscience and detachment By conscience is meant the ability to perceive and decide when the senses must be curbed and when they must be supressed The task of detachment, or *vairagya,* is to act upon the decisions of the conscience, putting them into practice with patience and perseverance The taste for objects of sense can linger even after the senses themselves have, by the help of the two powers at man's disposal, been brought under control. In order to eliminate this residue, to get rid entirely of all relish for objects of sense, one must turn to the greatest of sanctuaries, God Make use of the powers that are man's, knowledge and endurance, and at the same time seek to establish yourself in God Thus is the method of sense mastery explained to us in these three verses[5] Its full meaning is indicated By mastery is meant the endeavour to set oneself free from all craving through the practice of sense control Three adjectives are used to designate the triple discipline *yatatah,* striving, *vipascitah,* discernment, *matparah,* concentration upon God The Steadfast Wisdom of the *Gita* is the joint product of these three The science of sense mastery is here summarised

The language in which these verses are written has yet another, a profounder, meaning The dual powers man possesses are not equal to the task of mastering the senses. The *sadhaka* must, in order to supplement them, centre himself in God More is implied We are told to control our senses to the extent we are able by the help of these powers, according to our judgment, and

then to centre ourselves in God This shows that the act of becoming God-centred is, in itself, a separate subject of mediation The connotation is deep And it is, form the *sastra* point of view, correct Let us now see why it is correct

The *sadhaka* exerts himself to make his heart and mind invulnerable by removing all imperfections when the senses turn inwards and assail them But if he repeats over and over again to himself, as though telling beads, "All the faults of my heart must be removed removed, removed ", these faults, instead of taking themselves away, only fasten themselves within him the more firmly This happens because the thought of them is constantly in the mind, a process known as inverse *bhakti* Though this method is undertaken as a corrective measure, the very faults it seeks to correct are more firmly instelled by means of it Aberrations are not corrected by antithetical thoughts The opposite happens, they take root In the *Bhagavata* we are told how King Kamsa grew to be irradiated by Krisna through this inverse *bhakti* So we find that a man, in evincing extreme aversion, becomes the prey of the things he loathes If one thinks always of things which are forbidden in order to rid oneself of them, the forbidden things will take hold upon you Therefore, a person should take as the object of his mediation something which has a constructive, positive effect and, keeping it constantly in mind, undertake an appropriate course of study That something is the yearning of the human heart to attain to God

The appropriate *sadhana* is the endeavour to become totally absorbed in God and established in Him This is what is known as *brahmacharya* Our impulses, our emotional urges, must become inseparable from God, one with His *Brahmacarya* does not mean merely the control and suppression of the senses The control of the senses is not an end in itself nor an ultimate objective Our objective is the fixation of wisdom, we wish to steady it, to render it upright, unshakable, immutable In order to be fixed wisdom has to be set in something, hasn't it ? Where is it to be set once it has been collected together ? A place where it can be steady must be found The answer is set it in God We are not told here to devote ourselves wholly to God in order to achieve mastery of the senses or to eliminate all hankering after objects of sense These are negative, inhibitive implications, and do not constitute the entire meaning The sentence, "Master your senses and devote

yourself to God," has also a positive, constructive meaning Where do our impulses turn when they are checked outwardly ? Inwards to the soul The soul is indicated in the word *matparayana* which means devotion to God When support is withdrawn from the senses the heart also is left unsupported, empty It cannot remain long in such a condition Therefore, it must be filled with the thought of God and the sustenance of God When the heart is replete with the thought of God there is no question of its being assailed by the senses

It has already been stated that, in order to complete the mastery of the senses, it is but right to take the help of *bhakti* or devotion to God But even that is not enough We discovered later[6] that *bhakti* is not a spiritual discipline undertaken to achieve any purpose It is spontaneous, itself its own purpose, sufficient unto itself Devotion to God, *bhakti*, has no object external to itself, nothing extraneous or irrelevant enters into it *Bhakti* is for the sake of *bhakti* We often hear phrases like art for art's sake, knowledge for the sake of knowledge, wisdom for wisdom's sake These phrases are ill-considered Samkhya settled the question long ago An inanimate object cannot exist for itself alone Neither does nature exist for the sake of nature Nature exists for the sake of man art exists for, the sake of the soul, knowledge and wisdom are for my own sake It is a mistake to say that the inanimate exists for the sake of the inanimate But, however, mistaken such a statement may be in regard to all other things, in the case of *bhakti* it is correct To say that devotion to God is for the sake of devotion to God is not untrue, for God is not an inanimate object He is neither external nor irrelevant He constitutes my own essence, purified and cleansed *Bhakti* and *bhakti* only is a worthy subject for our meditation And for this reason it must be present in all our impulses and discipline

A person is ill An effort is made to cure the disease Why must it be cured ? The curing of the disease is not an end in itself The end is the welfare of the soul If it is necessary for the good of his soul for the patient to get well his cure is beneficial If it is necessary for the good of his soul for the patient not to get well his cure will not be beneficial One day I was talking with a man learned in the *Sastra* He was skilled in nature therapy "Can your system of medicine cure all diseases ?" I asked him He replied, "All diseases are curable according to our system of

medicine, but not all patients get well" His answer was very plain According to his medical canon a patient destined to die, dies But he dies in peace of mind A curable patient gets well He also gets well in peace of mind The case under discussion is similar Our attitude in *bhakti* is something like that of the nature therapist "If", says the *bhakta*, "it is God's will and conducive to the welfare of my soul for me to be healed, let my illness be cured And if it is not the will of God nor conducive to the welfare of my soul for me to be healed, let my illness continue" The patient thus sets his mind at peace by leaving all other considerations of God He knows only one thing and that is that devotion to God is what is required of him He knows nothing else Every outword labour he undertakes is done in order to achieve *bhakti* He does not wish to exploit *bhakti* or make use of it for the accomplishment of any external purpose

But the *Gita* reserves a place for the *bhakti* which arises out of desire, although it is secondary and extraneous to single-minded whole-heartedness Why ? It is natural that this question should arise here The answer is that if a person turns away from all supports other than God in order to attain something he desires it may be assumed that he has made the supreme choice To abandon all other supports and rely solely upon God is an act of no small worth Therefore the person who does it is assuredly striving for the uplift of his soul The fact that he desires something is of secondary importance Later, in the Ninth Chapter, this is discussed further We are told that the thoughts of one who worships God with wholehearted devotion are instantaneously purified even though he may be a person of evil intent His soul is made righteous straightaway Such is the power of wholeheartedness A person is ill He is anxious to get well His places his entire faith in God No doctors No *vaidyas* He forgoes even medicines and special foods "God will heal me", he says, and turns to Him with single-minded devotion God will heal him because of his faith or appear to him in person and gather him to Himself To others it may seem that he has not been given what he wanted, that his desire remains unfulfilled But to one wholly and reverently devoted to God it will seem that the greatest good has come to him

The example of Sudama is most appropriate here His poverty was extreme He suffered His wife sent him to Krisna Krisna

turned him away empty-handed But he showed him the honour of accompanying him part of the way home Sudama had set out with a little flattened rice tied to the end of his shawl It was quickly consumed and he came home with less than he had had when he left, with, in fact, nothing at all But he was happy "My wife sent me to Him with an ulterior motive But God is merciful ! He did not grant me an unworthy desire !" He strengthened his heart with this thought on the way When he arrived he found the entire village changed to gold ! And he cried "How great is God's compassion ! He has turned the village into gold not for me alone nor for my petty happiness God has given Let His gift be for the good of all !" God gives out of His mercy The excellence of a devotee is shown in a consistent and wholehearted consecration of his thoughts

God give the wife of his choice to Eknath Eknath cried, "How great is God's mercy ! With my wife's help I shall attain to God quickly !" Tukaram's wife was not to his liking He said, "How great is God's mercy ! If I had been given a wife to my liking I would have become too much attached to the life of the world" To give to one the wife of his choice was God's mercy and He showed His mercy also in withholding from the other a wife to his liking God is merciful also to one who finds no wife at all and He is merciful to the one who, though he finds a wife, loses her subsequently The devotee sees the mercy of God in all things Herein lies the excellence of the way of wholehearted devotion

Even though the purpose for which a person devotes himself to God is of secondary importance and arises out of desire, his mind and his heart, his consciousness, will be purified through the grace of God because of his wholeheartedness Or, to put it another way, desirelessness will supplant desirs Or to put it yet another way, attachment turns into detachment Desire, united to wholeheartedness, is not narrow or covetous. On close scrutiny it will be found to be a comprehensive desire for the general good I shall illustrate this point with a humble domestic example instead of a great one A certain woman is undivided in her devotion to God Her nose ring is stolen She wants it back So she reasons to herself in the following manner. "Lord, restore my nose ring to me I have not withheld any part of my faith from Thee Why then has my nose ring been stolen ? Why did anyone wish to steel it ? I shall not kill myself looking for it I shall not

inform the police I do not suspect anyone Grant the person who took it the impulse to restore it If it is returned I shall rejoice and distribute sweets to the poor I shall give the thief half of them I shall not look upon him with contempt And I shall devote myself to Thee, Lord, more intensely than ever If Thou dost not grant the thief the good impulse to return my ring I shall not be angry with him I shall be angry with Thee And because I am angry with Thee I shall devote myself to Thee more and more There now, go, and do whatever it is Thou hast to do ' Attachment and wholeheartedness, united, reveal to us a meaning as profound as this. And what, actually, is this imaginary woman's desire for her nose ring ? Does she not really want the desire to steal to be eliminated from the world, that the world should be purified ? The restoration of the ring is left to God's discretion He will do what is right according to His law, His law is righteous although we do not and can not know what it is If we could, would we not be God ourselves ? The woman in question will retain her faith whatever God does The consequences of uniting wholeheartedness to desire are here clearly illustrated

All this is not out of place in this context because it shows that our real purpose is to establish ourselves in God The mastery of the senses is secondary and extraneous desire is of no importance whatsoever Establish yourself in God and do not become infatuated with objects of sense That is enough All your desires will be washed away This, in brief, is the plain message of the *Gita* Desires stir in the heart and mind Do not allow them to find outward expression in acts If one acts on one's impulses these impulses become irremovable Therefore, one should not so act But the desires of a *sadhaka* are not removed from his mind and heart merely, by the achievement of external control over his senses They smoulder inwardly and continue to consume him His consciousness is not allowed any peace What is he to do ? We are told that he is to dedicate desire itself to God Eknath prayed thus to God "May all the impulses that stir in my mind and heart take upon themselves Thy form " In this way desires are transmuted Desire itself becomes irradiated with God With the help of *bhakti* irradiation grows from day to day

No man really desires evil The man himself may not know this Neither do others know it He is seen to run and jump about in order to obtain the external objects he wants He exerts

himself in order to possess the material world Now and then he is seen to run and jump about in order to obtain forbidden things also All his activity is no more than the yearning of a soul imprisoned in walls of flesh to become all-pervasive, universal This soul strives to make itself one with the whole of creation according to its own light It is not at all at ease within the narrow confines of the body This restlessness sometimes drives a man to drink To the drunkard those who follow the way of *bhakti* say, "Make God your wine Imbibe the beverage of your devotion Drink outward wine no more " This we find in Umar Khayyam's Rubayyat Immutability is to be found in the cup of devotion When desire is thus dedicated to God it takes on a divine character Therefore, does God tell us to establish ourselves in Him Do not be alarmed if desires for objects of sense stir within you Avoid the temptation to indulge your pleasure in them Place your desire at the service of God Even anger and covetousness can be dedicated to Him Aberrations and desires alike will become irradiated and transformed All dirturbances of of the mind will subside and wisdom grow stable, quite, immutable

If desirelessness, wholeheartedness and the thought of God are found even in the pursuit of material knowledge purification of the consciousness may take place No difference between the material and the spiritual world then remains And this difference is not, in fact, a true one To a mathematician mathematics is God His self-discipline centres in and arises out of this concept Of a certain mathematician it is said that he discovered a new theory—a theory which was an addition to the treasure-house of the world's knowledge—and that he confined it to paper The paper was lost The mathematician, however, was unperturbed He showed no regret Such tranquility of spirit could not possibly be found in mathematics alone It is to be understood that he studied mathematics with a mind wholly dedicated to God It may be that he never pronounced the name of God That would make no difference to the quality of his worship A spinner like myself becomes completely absorbed in his spinning Somebody else may be completely absorbed in a pure form of social work The senses cannot attack the hearts or disturb the minds of those for whom their work is as an act of reverent worship No success attends the efforts of those who study science or anything else from the

viewpoint of material knowledge only The reason is plan Material things, whatever they are, differentiate themselves from the spirit How can the spirit lose itself in something which is not of the spirit even though it may try very hard to do so ? If the object of one's striving is thought of as God there is no obstacle to one's losing oneself in it One can submerge oneself totally

The outward sign of the presence of the Steadfast Wisdom is sense mastery It is discussed at length in the ten middle verses The sense is dealt with in the first three Then the relationship between sense mastery and the Steadfast Wisdom is explained and the successive stages of its development given in due progression The first two verses insists upon the importance of sense mastery to the Steadfast Wisdom and the next two give the steps which follow The exposition of the theory of sense mastery begins at this point

dhyayato visayan pumsah sangas tesu pajayate,
sangat samjayate kamah kamat krodho 'bhijayate [7]

One who makes no effort to control his senses, who is immersed in the contemplation of wordly thinge, comes to depend upon association with those things Association means familiarity Out of continual association in thought with worldly things is born an attraction for those things The mind becomes tied to them Out of this bondage is born desire, covetousness The order is, firstly, thoughts of material things, secondly, association with them, and lastly, desire for them There is no very clear demarcation between the three stages They are, rather, three aspects of the same tendency A large river is known by many names as it passes from its source to the sea but it has a single stream These three stages are, similarly, three names for the same movement How can things made of clay differ from clay ? From thoughts of worldly things we come to know them, that is to say, they take shape and definition in our hearts A certain man, at the insistence of a friend, accompanied him to a wine shop The friend asked him to go a second time He went Again and again he went This is called association, Little by little the act of frequenting the wine shop begn to appear attractive The man found it fun derived pleasure from it and developed a liking for it This is called desire for covetousness Warth is

born from covetousness, says the *Gita* *kamat krodho bhijayate*

Here we are not given a very clear lead however The critics seem to find themselves in difficulties The question as to in what manner warth is born out of covetousness has become very complicated Out of warth springs illusion, fascination, and from fascination comes falsification or loss of memory Obscuration of the intelligence follows This order of progression is not difficult to understand What is not at all clear is exactly how warth is born out of covetousness Samkaracarya, in his commentary, writes *kamat kutascit pratihatat krodho bhijayate*, Here he says that warth arises when desire is furstrated But if a way is found to avoid frustrating a desire, warth should not arise It is not always true, therefore, to say that warth is born of desire For it is not so born if a desire meets with no obstacle to its fulfilment Gandhi solved the problem by saying that desire is never satisfied This is his explanation Ordinarily speaking this is true The desire to experience the world is never fully satisfied. Desire grows It does not bring contentment Once you have ten thousand you begin to want a lakhs Then a crore Numerical succession has no end Neither has desire Yayati's words have become famous "A fire blazes up when a burnt offering is dropped into it and desire blazes up when it is fed also" Therefore, Gandhi's explanation seems unanswerable It is almost exactly the same as Samkaracarya's Unless a limit is set to a desire it will inevitably meet with an obstruction somewhere or other Wrath is in that case unavoidable This seems to be the implications of what Samkaracarya says In the *Gita* desire is likened to an unquenchable fire Satiation is inconceivable A point is never reached when fire says it will consume no more

There is no escape from disaster this way But will wrath find entrance if a person modifies his outward circumstances to suit his desires or, learning from experience, modifies his desires to fit his circumstances ? The possibility of desire being frustrated is much lessened if a harmony is established between our circumstances and wants An objection to the statement that wrath is born out of desire is here suggested Eknath, in the *Bhagvata*, elucidates this point "Desire", he says, "is either satisfied or not satisfied Wrath springs from unsatisfied desire Satisfied desire breeds covetousness " If this is so the word *krodha* must be taken to mean both wrath and covetousness in the widest sense The following stage, fascination, arises out of both anger and

covetousness When the *Gita* tells us about the three doors to hell it adds covetousness to desire and wrath It is of course known from experience that both wrath and covetousness stem from desire

The solution of our problem is to be found elsewhere The word *krodha* has been used here in a special sense Association with worldly things follows continual meditation upon them This association means the acceptance of the objects we contemplete as they present themselves to us These then become desirable, precious, and a fierce yearning for them is born This is convetousness We have been told that wrath will most certainly follow We are not told when it will follow It is apparent, therefore, that the word *krodha* is not used here in the ordinary sense The most common meaning of *krodha* is anger It is not used in this sense here The meaning is agitation of the mind, *ksobha* anxiety According to comparative philology the root meaning of the word *krudh* is *ksobha* Nearly everywhere in Sanskrit its synonym, the root *kup*, is used in the sense of anxiety, agitation of mind With the birth of covetousness the mind loses its clarity Discontent ensues Covetousness disturbs the equanimity of the mind whether desire is satisfied or not

Later we are given the affirmative, constructive, series of developments From it we arrive at the following meaning One who masters his senses gains serenity and attains a state of equanimity The word *krodha*, therefore, has been used here as an antinomy for equanimity A person becomes agaitated when he begins to want something This is discontentment The source of this agitation is a feeling of emptiness, incompleteness—the feeling that without a certain object which I desire, I am incomplete, inadequate This agitation muddies the mind and heart Clarity and purity are lost In Sanskrit the word *prasanna*, serene, is used also to mean clear Clear water is described as *prasannam jalam* Such is the water of the Dev tank at Singhgarh If a stone is dropped into this water its course from the surface to the bottom can be plainly observed By *prasanata* is meant both clarity and purity Valmiki said of the water at the *ghat* where he was accustomed to bathe *akardamam idam tirtham sajjananam mano yatha* (its waters are as clear and holy as the hearts of the good) The hearts of the good are in all ways clean and transparent, free from soilure, According to Jnanadeva also they are

akardama *Kardama* means *kleda*, *kleda* means matter extraneous to the water Water is dirtied when this matter is mixed into it and colours it Water, in itself, has no colour Therefore, it is clear, transparent When the should is in its own natural state it is transparent, *prasanna* When the desire for some extraneous thing is added to it, it takes on the colour of that desire It is dirtied This is called *aprasannata*, opacity, or lack of transparency The admixture of destroys the purity of the soul It is subjected to external influence, becoming subordinate to desire and thus losing its force D squient follows, anxiety, restlessness This gives rise to *ksobha* The word *krodha* is used here to describe this condition In its natural state the soul is as tranquil, as silent, as dark as the night Its virtues are as numberless as the stars

When his soul is so replete in itself, possessed of so many virtues, why does man yearn to possess outward things ? Why does he wish to engage in conflict and struggle in order to do away with harmful things and obtain good things ? The reason is man is not conscious of his soul, he beholds only things external to himself The beauty of outer creation fascinates him Ugliness excites fear Neither beauty nor ugliness inhere in outward things These possess only from Attraction for them and aversion from them is the work of our consciousness The consciousness, our awareness, is subject to the senses The bray of a donkey is disagreeable to our ears and we are aware of it as an unpleasant thing. Actually, it is neither harsh nor soft. It is as it is To me it is disagreeable but a donkey likes it well enough Assume, for inscance, that I have a taste for music Do I impose my own likes and dislikes upon the sounds I hear when I decide that one is pleasant and another unpleasant ? I do not say the sound is false If I were to do so Marxists would immediately exclaim, ' You call the whole of creation a figment of the imagination !" The world is true It is not the fabrication of anybody's imagination And because it is not I call it God's creation But my idea of outward things, my concept, is my own The way I think about it is my own way or rather the way my sense-dominated awareness leads me to think I develop an attraction for some things and an aversion for other things And this attraction and aversion gives rise to *ksobha*, perturbation of mind and heart When we become aware of the repleteness of the soul and come to know that it is self-contained, we remain content and tranquil There is no feeling of inadequacy, of lack The attitude will be . Why should

I run after material things and agitate myself in order to be enslaved by them ? Why should these things not run after me, seek me out ? Why should I get so excited about them ? If they sit about panting for me, I cannot do the same for them ! The soul is diminished by continual craving for outward things Perturbation of the mind results It is this perturbation which is here called *krodha*, wrath

Krodhad bhavati sammohah From wrath springs stupidity, ignorance When I was a child I used to declare, "Even when I am furious my mind is clear" The absence of any relisation that anger has destroyed the peace of your mind is proof that it has done so All the powers of the mind are not, however, destroyed by this fascination The mind loses its edge, grows blunt stupid When this happens a person finds himself bewildered He is confused and perplexed when he has to decide what his duty is This is called *sammoha*

When perplexity and confusion appear the memory grows faulty Ordinary forgetfulness is not meant here Memory is said to have become faulty when a person forgets himself Memory does not mean keeping many things in mind I shall call any person who repeats after me exactly what I have said an inanimate machine I shall say he does not have the judgment to know what should be remembered and what forgotten Discrimination and judgment are an essential part of memory Why should I burden myself by trying to remember everything ? Some things must be selected for retention and others discarded The strength of memory lies in the power to remember what ought to be remembered and forget what we ought to forget Therefore by memory is meant the constant recollection of who and what you are, the recollection of the soul

Man frequently forgets his soul One the playing field he calls himself a sportsman On the battlefield he thinks of himself as a soldier When he looks at his son he regards himself as a father He forgets completely that he is, in reality, pure, transparent, colourlesss soul, devoid of all titles and designations He takes on the colour of the circumstances in which he finds himself This is what is here called an error, a failure, of memory In ordinary usage also this is considered a sign of faílling memory If a person babbles delirious, forgetting himself, we say he is not in his right mind The sea retains its tranquility no matter how much rivers may flood and destroy before they pour their waters into it.

And the volume of water in the sea does not diminish when rivers go dry What would we say if the sea, unmindful of its own depth and power, ran after the rivers ? Would we not say the sea forgot itself ? The same applies to us I am witness to the whole of creation If created things wish to run about, let them run after me I shall not run after them I am replete I lack nothing This realisation is memory, recollection To fell a lack in spite of this inner repleteness is to be forgetful, to have a foulty memory If a king dreame of becoming a beggar it will be said of him that he has forgotten his royal estate This case is similar

When a man loses his knowledge in this manner his mind loses its keenness and becomes subject to material considerations. When the mind becomes subject to material considerations or is swayed by material objects the foundations of its basic stability are undermined The loss of this stability is forfeited when a person foils to remember his true nature *smrti-bhramsad buddhi-nasah* Mind means the power to know Only the has the ability to know the soul To employ that mind in trifling matters for the enjoyment of material things is to deprive it of its natural and inherent right Imagine that a mother places a ring on the finger of her son The boy goes to a sweet shop and sells the ring for a few pieces of candy This is like that, The mind is replete with beauty, replete with the power and strength of spirit Nowhere else is splendour of judgment found nor the spirit of discrimination To use such a magnificent instrument for such a purpose is to spoil it A very special power of the mind is the power to realise the presence of the spirit When it concerns itself exclusively with material things it loses this power Is this not its destruction ? However brilliant a mind cut off from the spirit may appear to be it has, in fact, destroyed This must be understood

The connection between mastery of the senses and the Steadfast Wisdom has been shown in both the affirmative and negative aspects Its devolution from thoughts of material things to the destruction of the intelligence has been traced step by step The destruction of the intelligence, the loss of one's mind, is the final stage The stability of the mind is the final stage in its evolution, Proceeding in an upward direction we arrive at the stability of the mind just as, on the way downwards, we come to its destruction Our attention has been emphotically drawn to the terrible nature of this penalty All is lost when the mind is lost,

The *atman* may also be said to be destroyed. Nothing is left. This will become more apparent later

We have now studied all the lines of this verse[8] in their superficial and also their deeper meaning A solution for man based solely on its superficial meaning is arrived at too easily A man will begin to think he has achieved the Steadfast Wisdom after very little effort From a parallel statement in the Upanisads we shall see that the *Gita* itself wishes to emphasize the deeper meaning The Upanisads say *ahara-suddhau sattva-suddhih sattva-suddhau dhruva smrtih, smrti-lambhe sarva-granthinam vipra-moksah*[9] This means ' Purity of being comes from purity of food An unwavering memory springs from a pure state of being The consciousness of one who has an unwavering memory is free from all bonds " By food here is not meant only physical nourishment, the nourishment of the senses is also implied You will remember that I have already interpreted the word *nirahara*, as used in the *Gita*, in this sense Here the same process is described as the purifying method of the way of devotion, the *bhaktimarga* The consciousness, our inner being, is purified if the senses are nourished on wholesome things and impure articles withheld Memory then becomes as steady as the pole star, and as true One's own knowledge becomes immutable Later all the bonds of being fall away The human mind is shackled by many beliefs and prejudices In English these are called complexes By the purification of the mind is meant the elimination of all the complexes Their elimination sets the mind free It grows as clear as a mirror, unblemished Within it is reflected the *atman*

Because so much is demanded of memory, *smrti*, this word is not to be taken in its ordinary sense Memory, in English, is a faculty that is cultivated at school, like debating skill It means the power of retention In the practical world it does not do to be absent-minded The memory must be retentive A slothful person is often absent-minded and thus loses his skill Enough of memory may be preserved to serve for ordinary purposes of torpidity is not excessive More is not usually demanded of the memory But let no-one imagine that memory of this kind can break the fetters of the mind The power of memory, *smrti*, spoken of in the Upanisads and in the *Gita* is not a faculty so much as a state or condition of being Its true nature lies in constant awareness of the *atman* No matter how strongly beliefs

and prejudices may assail the mind they cannot affect it as long as it is in this condition An intellect which is always ready, alert, and armed with the shield of spiritual recollection, can hold its own against these attacks, repulse them and behold the *atman.*

Conversely the mind is deeply scarred by prejudices and beliefs when it is self-forgetful Any belief or idea makes an instant impression upon a child's mind We say the mind of a child is tender and clear It quickly takes any imprint The reason for this sensitiveness is the self-forgetfulness of the child Any external scratch leaves a mark We call this impressionability, susceptibility to belief, openness to influence If the influence to which the child is exposed is good the child will be good If it is bad the child will be bad The imprint set upon the mind will reflect the nature of the influence Such susceptibility, regarded in this way, is a most dangerous condition When we say that wise men are like little children we do not mean that they are as susceptible to influence as children We mean that they are as natural, as free from artificiality as children, as devoid of pride, as straight-forward No influence need be feared when a permament awareness of the *atman* keeps vigilant watch Such a person remains his own self even though he is seated in the market-place He has nothing to apprehend He has safely reached the father shore of self-preservation No fence nor any charm is required to protect him, because his mind is alert Moral codes provide protective fences for common minds This is a different kind of security Artificial external devices are needed for self-preservation when one's mind is open to external attack It is so open when we are self-forgetful These devices lose their utility and become superfluous where there is no self-forgetfulness

It is, therefore, correct to interpret *smrti* as meaning constant recollection of the *atman* This is proved in yet another way We have seen how fascination deludes the memory and how a memory so misled inevitably brings us to the destruction of the mind If the sequence is reversed and duly arranged the meaning here intended is further clarified The reverse series is memory is won when delusion is removed All doubts are dispersed and the mind steadied, Arjuna, attempting to describe how he felt after listening to the *Gita*, uses exactly these words He says

> nasto mohah smrtir labdha tvat prasadan maya'cyuta,
> ṣthito'smi gaṭo-samdehah karisye vacanam tava [10]

"Destroyed is my delusion and recognition has been gained by me through thy grace, O Acyuta I stand firm with my doubts dispelled I shall act according to thy word " The meaning of the word, *moha,* and with it the meaning of the word, *smrti,* also will be further explained if we examine the particular delusion which afflicted Arjuna

Arjuna, we find, was deluded by an erroneous idea of duty. By the word, *moha,* is here meant that Arjuna regarded his concept of duty as fixed and was, in consequence, agitated Why? The thought that he would have to kill his kinsmen in the impending battle agitated him violently He lost his sense of proportion, his ability to order his thoughts He was confused because he thought of some men as kinsmen and of others as non-kinsmen A weak-hearted judge begins to entertain doubts about his duty when his son is brought before, him as an accused He thinks it is best for his son to be acquitted He hesitates and his feelings distract him He is unable to decide what to do Arjuna was in a similar state Of himself he says at the beginning of the *Gita*

> karpanya-dosopahata-svabhavah, prcchami tva
> dharma-sammudha-cetah
> yacchreyah syan niscitam bruhi tan me,
> sisyaste'ham sadhi mam tvam prapannam [11]

"My very being is stricken with the weakness of pity With my mind bewildered about my duty, I ask thee Tell me, for certain, which is better I am thy pupil, teach me, who am seeking refuge in thee " Arjuna was puzzled and perplexed by his sense of duty This constitutes the Introduction to the *Gita* The word, *moha,* is used to describe his state It is therefore obvious that wherever this word occurs in the *Gita* it should be understood in the sense in which it is used here.

When we consider the source of Arjuna's *moha* or delusion the meaning of the world, *krodha,* is clarified This should be noted Arjuna was the victim of a delusion but he was not angry in the ordinary sense He was not in the least angry, he does not complain The thought that his kinsmen had come to fight against him filled him with sadness and this sadness was the source of his confusion But the *Gita* says the source of confusion is

krodha This is to say the *Gita* equates the word, *visada*, regret, grief, sorrow, with the word, *krodha*, using them as synonyms. The word, *visada*, merits a little study It consists of three syllables, vi-sa-da It is the antonym of the three-syllabled word, *pra sa-da* *Prasada*, as we have seen, is the root from which *prasannata* is derived And we have already seen that *krodha*, in its truest sense, is the antonym of *prasannata* Therefore, both words, *krodha* and *visada*, express sorrow, grief, regret, *ksobha*

Arjuna's uncertainty arose out of this sense of sorrow and regret He tells us that his uncertainty, his confusion, was dispelled by the grace of God through the recital of the *Gita* As his doubts receded he began to recollect himself He was no longer perplexed Arjuna says exactly this, in Upanisadic language A clear light is thus thrown upon the word, *smrti*. "All my doubts have been dispelled", he declares That is to say, the complexes which shackled his mind have been removed His mind is calmed, relieved, steadied, its balance restored His intellect has 'become stable, immutable He has attained to the Steadfast Wisdom All this and more is implicy in this passage To interpret it in the usual way under the influence of the historical Krisna is mistaken No-reference to an individual should be made and the deepest meaning of the words must be sought out and understood The roots of man of man, by its directness, has the capacity to penetrate to the roots of meaning and to grasp the ultimate, universal and, of course, most subtle implications of a word There, at this depth, is to be found the best that is in man Arjuna's words, *sthito'smi* ("I have grown calm") must immediately evoke the vision of the Steadfast Wisdom

But the verse is not of much value to ordinary people if we confine ourselves to the finer shades of its interpretation Yet, if we content ourselves with little and take only as much as satisfies our immediate need, the road to progress will be closed Both interpretations must be taken and each applied when and where appropriate Narada, in the *Bhakti-sutra*, uses all these words in their more obvious senses As constructive an interpretation as possible must be put on these lines though they may, of course, be applied to particular cases

Let us look at them a little more closely The first begins with "*dhyayata visayan pumsah*" and concludes with "*kamat krodho'bhijayate*" The following line begins with "*krodhad*

bhavati sammohah" and concludes with the destruction of the intelligence, *budhinasa* Why has this division been made ? Man's consciousness is divided into two parts, his intelligence and his mind In the first line we are told how the mind is assailed by thoughts of material things The nature of the blows to which mind is subjected is defined in the second line Material things attack the mind They do not make a direct assault upon the *buddhi*, the intellect It may, therefore, at first seem that, though the mind is affected, the intellect is unaffected Such a state does not last long Precautions much be taken in time and the assault upon the mind checked at its source as soon as it starts The first attack is made upon the senses It is into our senses that material objects force an entry and obtain a foothold, fortifying their position The attack must be resisted there This is explicitly indicated in the third section of the *Gita* We are told

> indriyani mano buddhir asya'dhisthanam ucyate,
> etair vimohayaty esa jnanam avrtya dehinam [12]

"The senses, the mind and the intelligence are said to be its seat, Velling wisdom by these, it deludes the embodied soul " The senses, the mind and the intellect are the three strongholds of desire The senses are the outermost Therefore, the battle begins with them This we have already noted

We have brought to a conclusion[13] our discussion of the steps which lead from thoughts of material things to the destruction of the mind In the next two verses the opposite development is given From our study of the way in which the mind is destroyed we have learned that the senses must be controlled both outwardly and inwardly Only by doing so can the mind be saved The question now arises as to whether a person who has knowledge of the *atman* will continue to make use to the senses or not The answer is given

> ragadvesaviyuktais tu visayan indriyais caran,
> atmavasyair vidheyatma prasadam adhigacchati [14]

"But a man of disciplined mind, who moves among the objects of senses under control and free from attachment and aversion he attains purity of spirit " The senses yield to the yoke when *viragya* is established, i e , all desires are dedicated to or absorbed

into God By means of senses which are subject to his will a man may move among material objects and use them while at the same time remaining serene and retaining his composure *prasannata* Only such a man can use the senses with safety For one to whose will his senses are not subject their use is perilous A person in a perilous situation does not conduct himself in an unconcerned manner For the source of both anger and hatred is found in the use of the senses can be used in the way they ought to be used only by a person who has no need to apprehend the onset of either fear or hatred For him the use of the senses will be a spiritual exercise It is sufficient for him to nourish the senses in a way that does not give rise to hatred and fear Mastery of the senses is indispensable to the attainment of *prasannata*, serenity But this does not mean that the senses are not to be used There would be no need to master them if no work was to be taken from them The chief thing is not to enslave onself, There is a difference between using a knief and being cut by one To sharpen a pencil with a knife is to make use of it To cut one's finger is to subjugate onself to the knife To employ the senses in the service of God is like sharpening a pencil with a knife. But to enslave oneself to them and permit them to destroy the mind is like cutting one's finger '

The process by which the mind is destroyed has been more clearly shown in its successive stages than the opposite process The explanation of the one illustrates the other also Nor do all stages have equal importance Three stages, the beginning, the middle and the end—or the seed, the impelling force and the fruit, as they are called in the *sastras*—require special attention Thoughts of material things are the seed From them springs discontent, agitation (I omit the word, *krodha*), this is the impelling force The fruit is the destruction of the mind The reverse procedure is to prevent the germination of anger and hatred This is the seed The impelling force will then be *prasannata* and the fruit will be composure, a steadied intelligence, calmness of mind These are the three main steps The rest can be deduced from them

The meaning of the word, *prasada*, has been studied at length It is a word, however, that often gives rise to mistaken notions These notions are not entirely corrected by interpreting it as meaning *prasannata*. *Prasannata* is usually taken to mean elation

or joyousness But *prasada* does not mean elation or joyousness and neither does *prasannata* *Prasada* means neither joy nor grief People assume that it means happiness Tulsidas describes the facial expression of Rama in the following manner

> prasannatam ya na gatabhisekatas
> tatha na mamle vanavasa duhkhatah,
> mukhambujasri raghunandanasya me
> sadastu sa manjula-mangala-prada [15]

"When his impending coronation was announced to him Rama's face showed no elation and it remained unclouded throughout the trials of a life of exile in the forest May the beauty of his countenance bless us with eternal welfare !" Tulsidas uses the word *prasannata* here in the sense that was current in his time If Tulsidas were alive today I would respectfully suggest that, for the sake of preciseness, he substitute "*prahrstatam ya na gatabhisekatah*" for "*prasannatam ya na gatabhisekatah*" Did he not wish to say that Rama let neither pleasure nor pain show on his face ?

The meaning of *prasannata* is "*nirvikarata*", the being undisfigured, without distortion No emotional expression controlled Rama's features He maintained a grave and dignified composure If the word, gravity, is alarming, the word, *prasannata*, is not *Prasannata* indicates the absence of anger and hatered, limpidity, clarity, purity *Prasannata* means that which, at sight, assuages agitation and grief This is its distinguishing characteristic Suppose a person loses his son He is in despair Nothing relieves his sorrow Suppose he sits down beside a stream Little by little his heart will grow quiet under the influence of the limpidity of the water Its purity is self-evident Unbidden, it soothes him The mere sight of it is a relief If we add the grammarian's word, *svasthya*, to *prasannata* its full meaning is more adequately expressed *Svasthya* means both bodily and mental health By physical health, the cannons of medicine tell us, we are to understand a balanced metabolism By mental health is meant a balanced state of mind, equanimity These too, together, make up the exact meaning of word, *svasthya*

> prasade sarva-duhkhanam hanir asyopajayate [16]

All suffering is completely and permanently eliminated through

the *prasannata* which is won by means of sense mastery This, the *Gita* tells us, is what *prasannata* alone can do for us Other methods allay some kinds of suffering temporarily Hunger disappears when we eat It reappears not long after Sleep dispels weariness but a time comes when sleep itself becomes tiresome We have recourse constantly to numerous pleasures in order to alleviate some of our afflictions But *prasannata* does away with them altogether, for *prasannata* takes up its abode at the source from which all affliction stems Scientific experiment has proved that unless the sensation of pain reaches the brain it is not felt Similarly, afflication cannot disturb one in whose inner being the fountain of *prasannata* flows We do not need to be told that darkness is dispelled when a lamp is taken into a lightless cavern It is more correct to say that darkness clothes itself in light Grief becomes joy in the inner being of one who is pure and *prasanna* For all suffering is caused by uncleanness, whether it be of the mind or of the body

When the inner being, *ceta*, grows clear and serene, the mind steadies down and grows calm of its own accord *Prasannacetaso hyasu buddhih 'paryavatisthate* [17] The Steadfast Wisdom is not long in coming after *prasannata* has been achieved Obviously our efforts must be directed to its achievement by keeping our inner being free from all disfiguring movements, uncontorted All the other methods employed to steady the mind do not produce more than a transitory unity in it, a passing moment of concentration They are artificial and temporary expedients Permanent tranquility comes with the cleansing of the mind Tranquility or equanimity, once it has become the normal and natural condition of our inner being, is disturbed with difficulty

This is precisely the reason for the unity and serenity of a child's mind Look into the eyes of a child They gaze intently at an object for a long time without blinking We adults open and close our eyes at least ten times in the same interval Even a yogi's gaze falters before that of a child A this happens because of the purity of a child's inner state of being They are not equally fearless When they are frightened they shut their eyes The consciousness of a child has been made the subject of much fruitless discussion by educationists Some declare that a child's mind is restless It is not the child's mind that is restless,

the educationist's is He superimposes his own restlessness upon the child, or, as the proverb runs, the thief chastises the policeman. Concentration, unity of attention, is not at all difficult for a child Here, when we spin, the children become so absorbed in their work that their elders are astonished What is surprising about it ? A steady continuous movement is an aid to concentration That is why it is practised by maintaining a steady flow of consecrating water over a *lingam* When the initiate meditates beside a fountain the movement of whose waters is continuous and unbroken his mind is quietened and unified The continuous drawing out of a thread easily induces single-minded attention in a child and leade to contemplation and meditation To say that this state cannot be maintained for long because the strength of a child's mind is not great is a different thing altogether There is no doubt that concentration comes easily to a child How easy ? If you put a bit of rock candy into a child's mouth it will suck away at it, completely oblivious of everything else, absorbed in the sweetness, "Look ! Look ! See how the crow is flapping its wings !" The child turns its attention to the crow and all its faculties immediately become engaged in watching it It is absorbed in contemplating the crow The ease with which children become absorbed in the contemplation of things is the reason children learn quickly, accepting things at once The purity, the cleanliness, of their inner being enables them to do it The chief object of the practice of concentration is to achieve a permanent state of inner cleanliness All else is secondary

How can concentration or singleness of mind be achieved when the devil of desire dances inwardly ? It is dawn The spell of sleep has just left our eyes Our being has been refreshed and strengthened by the daily bath, our vision half-unclosed The vision of some divine image, or of a painting, or of a fountain or radiance, floats before our eyes Low music is a sweet and distant sound These, together, combine to facilitate the attainment of five or ten minutes of absorbed contemplation ! How can contemplation of this kind, contemplation induced by external aids, last ? If *samadhi* is the natural state of the *atman*, it must be simple, easy External aids ought not to be required It should exist and continue, whether a person does or does not do anything Eating, moving about, looking after things, is

called activity. Exertion is necessary to engage in these activities, one must work, make an effort. But *Samadhi* is the basic, original, natural state of being. What need is there for exertion, labour, in connection with it ?

"*Samadhi* sets in six months after the purification of the inner being has taken place", says the *Mahabharata*. This must be taken to mean that Vyasa must have calculated that it took him six months to attain *samadhi* from the time of his inner cleansing. Why the botheration of a six months' wait otherwise ? By six months does he mean 180 days ? Would 179 days not have sufficed ? It can only mean that the cleansing of his consciousness was not complete. If Vyasa himself were interrogated about this he would no doubt answer that what the *Gita* says is correct. And the *Gita* tells us that *samadhi* follows instantly upon the complete cleansing of the mind. A state of this kind, a state in which all exertion ceases, can, it is needless the say, be achieved only when all effort is abandoned. It comes of its own accord, spontaneously. My brother, Balkoba, declared that he could not sleep however hard he tried. I told him he could not sleep because he made an effort to do it. Sleep will come of itself when he stops straining after it. The case is the same in regard to singleness of mind. True concentration, *samadhi*, only comes when one gives up trying. Efforts to achieve concentration rebound to attack the consciousness by way of retaliation. After a brief period of quiet absorption perturbation again appears.

This is not to say that concentration cannot be practised with the assistance of external aids until we reach a point when it has become our natural and normal condition. A *sadhaka* may certainly derive advantage from external aids in his spiritual discipline. And all of us should certainly make use of them. The Sixth Chapter of the *Gita* tabulates them for the *sadhaka's* convenience. The early morning is the most suitable time for the practice of spiritual exercises. The hour is propitious. It almost embodies the highest virtues. Darkness has gone. The light is yet to come. The day symbolises the mundane virtues, the night the *tamasa* ones. The hour of their intermingling belongs to the *sattva* qualities, the highest and best ones, standing for the equanimity of the *atman*. Therefore this is the hour chosen by custom for the performance of the *sandhya* service. The landscape

is lovely at this time, unfolding in all its purity It is the appropriate moment to test one's powers of concentration The work of the day takes up the whole of the day Why waste the dawn hour? The dawn is, unquestionably, the best time for meditation But to support the mind in its meditation by resort to external aids is very different from the building up of its inherent powers of concentration until they stand as erect and strong as a wall, strong in their own strength In the last analysis we, therefore, find that the attitude taken by the *Gita* is the correct one When the inner being is cleansed, when it is freed from all disfiguring passions, it will stand upright of itself, strong with its own strength Patanjali hints at this also He considers it necessary to follow the rules laid down in the *dhyanayoga, yoga* of meditation The object of these rules is to bring about an inner cleansing When it has taken place, *prasannata* is attained No device is then required in order to steady the mind or achieve the single-mindedness of concentration

When through the mastery of the senses *prasannata* is achieved the intelligence becomes quiet and steady, sure and certain[18] Lack of sense-control results in the disturbance of the consciousness and intelligence is destroyed, its equilibrium disrupted This much we have learned from our examination of the processes involved in both these developments The advisability of sense-control is apparent Is it such a calamity if the equilibrium of the intelligence is disrupted? In case such a strange question occurs to anybody the answer is given in this lines beginning '*buddhi-nasat pranasyati*"[19] A question of this kind really ought not to be asked, nor should it be answered if it is asked Yet the *Gita* gives the answer—and not only the answer, an entire verse is devoted to its explanation Even a boy can understand the sentence, "*buddhi-nasat pranasyati*" Then why is a special effort made to explain it? It is used as a device to test the concepts which we call ideals of life The fact that all of these concepts are based upon a steadfast mind and mastery of the senses must be firmly implanted A quiet conscience, good thoughts and one's inner happiness—all these are priceless life values And all three are endangered when the mind lacks stability Therefore a steadfast mind and its accompanying control of the senses are of equal value Nay, the last two have a separate and distinct value of their own No

guide can point out anything else of equal value to the health both of the individual and of society as a whole These five things have been brought together within two short lines and I, therefore, call them the Five Jewels

na 'sti buddhir ayuktasya na ca 'yuktasya bhavana,
na ca 'bhavayatah santir asantasya kutah sukham [20]

"For the uncontrolled, there is no intelligence, nor for the uncontrolled is there the power of reflection, and for him without reflection there is no peace, and for one without peace how can there be happiness ?" This is the verse Literally it means that one who is not yoked has no intelligence, he has no power of thought or reflection Without thought or reflection there is no peace and happiness It requires to be interpreted The opening words formulate the logical conclusion of all that has been said so far *Ayukta* means one who is not yoked, a man who is not his own master, Intelligence lies in self-mastery Lack of self-mastery shows lack of intelligence This is the inference This phrasd therefore merely sums up what has gone before "*Ayuktah kamakarena phale sakto nibadhyate* [21] Here, in the Fifth Chapter, the *Gita* tell us that a man who is not his own master is led, by his impulses, into the trap of hoping for results This statement casts light on the meaning of *ayukta* *Ayukta* means attached, subservient to desire Literally it means "without a yoke" By yoke is here meant the yoke of self-control Regard this as the key to life Once you know whether an individual or a society is governed by self-restraint or self indulgence you will have found out the truth about their way of life Therefore this must be called the primary or chief value of life The second value, imperturbubility of mind, or a steady intelligence, derives from it

The verse presents no difficulties up to this point But the next phrase seems fragmentary It says "Because one without self-control tacks intelligence, so he has no power of reflection either" The language is very defective The *Gita* apparently intends to say that *bhavana*, thought or reflection, is the third value From it comes peace and from peace comes happiness The values have been set out in this order Unless thought is taken there is no peace and without peace there is no happiness, the necessity of thought is made plain if we put the matter this way

The series, beginning with self mastery and ending with happiness, is as follows self-mastery, thought, peace, happiness Why is *buddhi*, intelligence, thrust into the middle ? No connection between thought or reflection and the intelligence has yet been established The word *buddhi* therefore appears irrelevant in this context The necessity of self-mastery could be proved by means of this verse alone, leaving the *buddhi* aside But this is not the intention Self-control is most certainty necessary But why is it linked up here with the *buddhi* ? This verse, from whichever way we look at it, appears superfluous It should have been written this way • "*na 'sti buddhir ayuktasya na ca* "*buddhasya bhavana*" Now it reads Without self-control there is no intelligence and without intelligence no power of reflection But, taking the verse as we find it today, we must assume that this is the meaning intended and construe in accordingly Therefore, in the first line, we must add, in our imagination, the word *evam* It will then read "*na 'sti buddhir ayuktasya, ataivam na ca yuktasya bhavana*" The meaning thus becomes, "Without self-mastery there is no intetligence, without intelligence no thought, without thought no peace, withont peace no happiness"

How is it that a link was omitted when the steps from self-mastery to happiness were set out in due order ? The question is sure to arise The answer is that Krsna has here used *buddhi* and *bhavana* as of identical inseparable meaning A special philosyphy is contained in this idea By *bhavana*, thought, is meant matured intellectual perception, the ripening of the intelligence, The *buddhi* reaches a point at which it turns into *bhavana*, becoming thought and reflection, a concept

About some things our ideas are so definite that no thought is required For instance when a person hears that a murder has been committed he will exclaim to himself "How dreadful !" This is called a thought Thoughts of this kind are deeply embedded in the mind of society They do not demand considera-tion and judgment from us Human society made its assessments long ago and has remade them again and again down the centuries Any person belonging to any set in India may be asked, "Does wine have no virtue at all ? What is the harm if one drinks it in moderation ?" The reply will be the same, ' I do not understand what you are talking about" The issue was settled by our ancestors "There is more loss than gain in liquor" says the

Koran The subject was a matter of argument for the authors of the *sastras* But no room is left for argument once a mature conclusion has been reached by means of the intelligence This mature conclusion is a concept, *bhavana* It is a self-evident truth

Ideas which are the fruit of intelligently conducted experiment are conducive to social progress when they are taken up and put into practice by society In war many people die It might be argued that since they are dead anyway, why should they not be eaten ? But the idea that human flesh must not be eaten is so firmly embedded in man's mind that no argument is needed This in the very best example of a good thought at work Peace prevails in a society where good thoughts are deeply and strongly fixed in the consciousness of the community Unrest is constant and disturbances continual in a society in which intelligence has not reached maturity, in which uncertainty and hesitation arise at all times, where considered judgments have not been reached

As a result of historical experience certain concepts about certain things have been formed by society Social life is regulated by means of them Thus the equilibrium of society is maintained But not all these concepts have been formed intelligently They must be re-examined and sorted out by the light of the intelligence That part of them which is found to be essentially intelligent will be retained and the unintelligent parts discarded A concept should not be uprooted entirely It should be purified, clarified, made more explicit No values will be permanent in society if this is not done Anarchy and unrest will appear It will be difficult to maintain any sort of balance, We have given several examples of good social concepts The addition of one or two more will make the implications even clearer

Our society has, in consequence of the concept we have discussed, come to regard the eating of all flesh as degrading A number of castes and communities have given it up altogether But the people of these castes have come to regard themselves as superior to others The matter did not end there Some castes came to the regarded as untouchable Other elements also entered into these considerations of high and low, but the fact that some castes had given up meat eating was present It is good that meat eating should be given up But the superiority and inferiority associated with it must be eliminated before the idea can be

generally accepted and strengthened

Another idea of the same kind prevalent in our society is the idea that the giving of alms is noble The gift of food is regarded as the best and least blameworthy of all kinds of alms-giving In the effort to give effect to the idea in practice, however, it has become distorted, injurious and repulsive But to cast out the good concept which is its source will not be conducive to our welfare This good can be cherished and strengthened after the defects of practice have been corrected The right of every hungry person to food is the source of the idea that the gift of food is the best of all kinds of alms To feed the hungry is the duty of society Gifts of food reach people simply and directly Into other kinds ot help agencies, middlemen and crookedness enter Vigilant watch must be kept to see that food is not given to the well-fed, that the gift is not in excess of the need and laziness encouraged The basic concept must be retained and the methods of applying it in practice corrected in order to be beneficial in their effects When an idea of this kind is examined and corrected intelligently we arrive at a social insight

Different concepts will certainly exist in a country Peace will prevail if these are all examined and purged of falseness If they are not so purged there will be unrest and trouble Nobody wants unrest When it appears various artificial and violent means are taken to suppress it That is what is happening today If peace is to be maintained in society by natural and normal means our ideas must be kept correct and put into practice correctly Incorrect ideas must be eliminated The responsibility of determining the correctness or the falseness of an idea belongs to the man of Steadfast Wisdom He is able to distinguish the false from the true because his mind is stable and is not swayed by irrelevant considerations. The visual arts, music, aesthetics entertainment, religious observances and so forth are all inbluded under the head of concepts These must have adequate scope for expression if the life of a country is to develop A country passes into decline when the ideas current in all about these things are haphazard Disorganisation will overspread it That is to say, our ideas concerning all their things must be firmly established on the foundation of the Steadfast Wisdom Steadfast Wisdom means wisdom derived from the *sastra* It includes knowledge of the *atman*, philosophy, mathematics, the science of creation and of

physics, the art of thinking and so forth, Peace follows of its own accord when our social ideas about all these things are based upon the Steadfast Wisdom No artificial or violent devices need to be employed for its maintenance This kind of a society will be non-violent. Laws will also be such that peace will be their natural manifestation

For this it is necessary to awaken and cherish intelligence in a society the intelligence that leads people to give the responsibility of leadership to people of Steadfast Wisdom In a society where a sufficient degree of intelligence has not been developed or evoked by its chief members leadership is in the hands of people of unstable minds In a society led by men of Steadfast Wisdom social ethics will be based upon self-control The factual truths of life will be scientifically ascertained and make known to the public By art is meant the expression of the feelings The arts, with the help of science, will creat a social dispensation conducive to the equanimity of society Through this endeavour, this *yoga,* permanent peace and contentment will be established

The word, *bhavana,*[22] thought or concept, needs to be analysed a little more closely According to the Vedas the word means a mixing of liquids, a blending of diverse elements Drugs are triturated in homeopathy The liner the trituration the more efficacious it is, its strength increases The strength of the intelligence also grows the finer it is made until at last it is transformed into *bhavana,* throught, idea, concept Because the intelligence of a man of Steadfast Wisdom matures into concepts his life is pervaded with them Concepts, ideas, fill his life to the brim There is another distinction between *buddhi* and *bhavana.* Intelligence does not do more than indicate direction A concept shows both direction and method *Buddhi* becomes *bhavana* when it lends itself to being worked upon In order thus to transform the intelligence it has to be stirred The idea in the phrase, "*sarva-bhutesu ca atmanam*"[23], the idea that the spirit is immanent in all living things, is not a matter of argument to a man of Steadfast Wisdom but a concept permeated with the emotion of realisation Therefore, a tender concern for the welfare of society is part of it This tender concern is as natural and spontaneous as the concern of a mother Social service follows simply, from an inherent inclination The life of a man of Steadfast Wisdom is irradiated with intelligence, but there is no cause to question if,

when this is so, there is a place in it for ideas, for we have seen that the intelligence becomes a concept the instant it comes to rest The life of a man of Steadfast Wisdom is relete with concepts because it is irradiated by the intelligence

This question arises for another reason also The word *bhavana* is often used nowadays in a sense which is the opposite of the sense in which the word *buddhi* is used, and contrasted with it We often speak of one person as being dominated by intellect and of another as being dominated by ideas We wish to say that one is more intelligent and less dominated by ideas and the other is less intelligent and more dominated by ideas By this we mean that the mind of one is without drive or propulsion, that the good of intelligence does not act upon it The word mind is used But according to the *Gita* the word *bhavand* indicates a stable condition of the heart The *bhavana* of the *Gita* is a natural virtue of the heart, not an unnatural state of the mind The *Gita* does not make any distinction between the heart and the mind It speaks of the innermost, the least aceessible part of the *budhi* as the heart In the following phrases, by *hrd* heart, is clearly meant the inmost part of the *budhi hrdi sarvasya dhisthitam*[24] and "*hrddese risthati*"[25] When we refer to a person as dominated by *bhavana* what we really say is that he is dominated by an unnatural or unhealthy state of mind A concept which is not subject to the intelligence is certainly an unnatural and unhealthy one The *Gita* has no use for such On the other hand when we speak of a person as predominantly intellectual what we wish to say is that only his powers of debate have developed, that his inmost being has been watered by feeling The stability of the man of Steadfast Wisdom is of a completely different kind He surrenders his intelligence to his heart He drives his intellect, keeping it astir until it changes into heart and is lost in feeling In *bhavana*, ideas and intelligence fuse in feeling, an emotion realisation

Methods of tranmuting the intelligence, *buddhi*, into *bhavana* have been discussed in a general way Several usages of the *sastra* must be mentioned The first is the use of repetition, like the telling of a rosary, By this is not meant the mechanical repetition of a *mantra* or prayer The *mantra* or prayer must be studied, turned over and over in the mind The formulation of the thought in words is of assistance, but it is no substitute for the act of thinking even though it may appear to be so Thinking for the purpose of discrimination, making distinctions Once a

distinction has been made, a perception gained, it is formulated in words and fixed in the mind by oral repetition This is the difference between oral repetition and the process of thinking If this difference is removed the two become one and the same act. Meditation is the sccond method Meditation means concentration to the point of self-absorption in reflection, the formation of judgments, and concomitant prayer The third method consists in the reshaping of the whole life in accordance with the judgements reached It is called *acarana* or practice Through *japa* or repretition, *dhyana* or meditation and *acarana* or practice an intelligent perception is transmuted into realisation

This process can be studied from yet another standpoint The intelligence of a man of Steadfast Wisdom is rooted in the spirit When, as a result of constant, repeated and vigorous meditation, spiritual knowledge becomes a part of our nature it is transmuted into devotion Therefore, the word *bhavana* also means *bhakti* To say the perception takes the form of love is to say that knowledge takes the from of devotion When a perception takes on definitive shape and form it becomes so agreeable that the mind constantly returns to it When this happens it is clear that perception has become love From this it will be clear that there is no peace without love and devotion When a perception becomes very dear the thought of it revolves constantly in the mind, the heart enfolds it and is held as if by a spell No disquiet can touch it A tree is green and fresh if its roots are constantly watered Similarly, if the fountain of perception flows in the inner depths of being, if it takes the form of love, and is constantly watered with low, life stays fresh and vigorous Trouble is transmuted into triumph, loss into gain Peace waxes strong Perception and devotion are thus seen to be inseparable, indivisible Without perception there is no devotion, without peace no happiness

Happiness does not mean the pleasure of the heart and mind Mental and emotional pleasure and the happiness of the individual are not one and the same There is no reason way the happiness of the individual should be identical with his mental and emotional pleasure Many people today are suffering mentally and emotionally because of their country's condition They find happiness in such suffering This is because suffering is sometimes salutary as when it is attended by a sense of benignant service.

What is sweet or bitter to the tongue is not necessarily sweet or bitter to the person Medicine is bitter to the taste but pleasant to the patient When something is good for a person he joyfully accepts the suffering that accompanies it Pleasure and sorrow are interpreted differently from the viewpoint of mental and emotional pleasure and the viewpoint of life Health constitutes physical happiness The desire to bang against a wall, to misuse the strength of the body, a sense of excess, of overflow, are not signs of health When a man cannot contain his own strength, his strength itself is and affliction means maintaining a healthy equilibrium in the body Health is one thing and excessive physical strength another In health there is sense of well-being In uncontrolled strength there is grief, regret Neither is the pleasure which excites or thrills true happiness True happiness is something else It is to be found in peacefulness, not in a disturbed agitated consciousness Its source is tranquility of spirit From this tranquility, a tranquility which means perfect composure, comes realisation and from realisation comes *bhakti* or devotion Peace and undecaying happiness follow in due order

Other kinds of pleasure disturb our peace Distaste follows The same thing over and over again also gives rise to distaste The heart craves a change Spiritual happiness is a happiness which never gives rise to distaste The heart that has this happiness wishes to remain always as it is It never develops a dislike for its state Music, no matter how sweet it may be, makes life unbearable if we have to listen to it the twenty-four hours of the day The same applies to colour For some time it is pleasant to watch the play colour but the eyes weary of it For relief they turn to the colourless sky, for the sky does not weary the eyes This is why, during prayers God is thought of as being like the sky The difference between the spiritual happiness of the *atman* and other kinds of happiness is comparable to the difference between the tranquil, neutral blue of the sky and other bright colours By spiritual happiness is meant the unbroken happiness of existence Nobody thinks of himself as not existing One can think of dispensing with the body Or one can imagine that to reside in such-and-such a place is unpleasant But no one thinks of himself as not existing at all, anywhere It is not possible for a person to become annoyed with the fact of his own existence

All other happiness is extraneous to it Even the sense of being itself is a departure from this state

In the *yoga sastra* the pure existence of the *atman* is explained to us symbolically by the act of breathing The subtle, elusive movement between inhalation and exhalation is the movement of neutrality, the middle point of equilibrium, of non-involvement in the process, which we must understand pure existence to be The act of indrawing the breath is complete while the act of releasing it has not yet begun A crude effort to prolong this moment is made by some misguided *sadhus*, a practice called *dirgha kumbhaka* There is no real need to prolong it What is needed is to understand the condition of the *atman* which the example of breath control symbolises and to retain the flash of understanding as a permanent realisation The act of breathing does not do more than illustrate this condition Many similar illustrations can be given Jnanadeva gives several in the *Amrtanubhava*. "The night has ended but the day has not yet begun", "The autumnal flooding of the river has eased but the dwindling of its waters that comes with the summer has not begun" Breathing is an illutration, just as these are illustrations If *kumbhaka*, breath control, has to be practised for physical reasons it may be done. But from the spiritual point of view it is enough to focus attention on the middle point, the interval between exhalation and inhalation, which has no designation Life itself, as a whole must be kept free from designations, from labels No qualifying adjectives should be retained which label a person as this or that In the basic and natural, tranquil condition of man which remains when all virtues and vices have been removed happiness is to be found In order to distinguish this happiness from other kinds of happiness it is referred to as eternal happiness, spiritual happiness, the happiness of existence It is true happiness because it is real happiness Out of it the word *saccidanada* has been formed This happiness is attained when the *buddhi* comes to rest in the *atman* and is firmly established there Therefore the life of one whose wisdom has been established is a happy life

The question will arise here that if the intelligence is not applied to affairs other than spiritual how are these affairs to be managed ? Take as an example a person who deals in skins,

How will he do business unless he applies his mind to it? And how can he apply his mind? If his intellect, *buddhi*, is so firmly set in the *atman*, how can any outward work be conducted? The intelligence that deals with ordinary affairs is only one of the powers of the mind Let us call it the power of debate, ot argument There is nothing to prevent its utilisation in outward affairs But the innermost part of our awareness of ourselves as individual beings, our sense of identity, must be kept firmly set in the *atman*, steadfast and unshakable Spiritual realisation must not be all spent in outward affairs Of course, it is extremely difficult to use ordinary intelligence in outward affairs and at the same time remain merged with the *atman* The difficulty is no excuse for dispensing with it Success attends unremitting effort because effort is genuine, not artificial Therefore, success will attend upon it, success is certain

I have found a way out of this difficulty Outer things must not be allowed to produce and immediate effect If effects become apparent later, let them, but for the moment check them If someone makes a joke do not laugh at once If someone strikes you do not cry out instantly Consider that you have felt the touch of God's hand If tears spring to your eyes later, let them When news of your mother's death comes to you, control yourself at first. Do not give way to grief Do not allow your equanimity to be disrupted. When your heart and mind have been mastered to this extent the rest will follow.

In the next verse[26] the necessity for self-control is stressed again from yet another point of view

> indriyanam hi caratam yam mano 'nuvidhiyate,
> tad asya harati prajnam vayur navam iva 'mbhasi [27]

"When the mind runs after the roving senses, it carries away the understanding, even as the wind carries away a ship on the waters " When the senses go wherever they wish and the mind follows after them it cannot retain its stability or remain uninvolved When the mind joins forces with the senses they become doubly strong Then the intelligence abandons its proper work It is not, however, blunted Intelligence cannot become unintelligent It turns evil Being evil, it is more harmful than stupidity If the mind joins forces with the intellect, *buddhi*, its

strength is doubled and the senses are compelled to follow its lead If the mind defers to the intelligence and the senses yield to the mind, all the usages of life minister to the spirit If, on the other hand, the mind follows after the senses and the intelligence is dragged along, unbecoming actions result and these are sought to be justified with evil argument In such circumstances all the usages of life are antagonistic to the spirit

The process by which intelligence is destroyed has already been discussed Its beginnings in the attack made by thoughts of material things upon the mind is studied in one verse The birth of delusion, etc and the effect it has on the mind is examined separately in another This is what we are discussing now When a horse's reins are in the rider's hands and the horse obeys them the rider reaches his destination without any difficulty On the other hand, if the horse controls the reins and the rider follows his lead, there is no hope of his ever arriving The *Kathopanisad* explains it this way In this verse a boat is used to illustrate the point The intelligence, like a boat, is the means by which he can cross safely over otherwise uncrossable places If, however, it is at the mercy of the wind, it loses its power of conveying us safely to the other shore When the intelligence is at the mercy of the mind it loses its power to guide Shipwreck follows

If there were any way to prevent the intellect from being affected when the mind runs after the senses we might say it does not matter and let the mind go And we may safely assume that it does not really matter if the mind runs after the senses and inclines to material things when the intellect and the *atman* are sufficiently strong and united Some do indeed maintain that, though they enjoy the comfort of material things, their intellect is not entangled by them The claim that when they make judgments they do so impartially, forgetting these gross considerations But they are mistaken It is not possible It can only become possible if we detach ourselves and remain unattached when the senses, the mind and the intelligence, all three combine The *atman* is completely unattached and separate Between the *atman* and the *buddhi* there is an empty space a space in which it is possible to erect a wall But this can be done only after one has attained to the Steadfast Wisdom This is called Vedanta It is difficult, admittedly, but not impossible. There is no space between the *buddhi* and the mind, for they are contiguous Therefore although

a division can easily be made between the *atman* on the one hand and the intellect the mind and the senses of the other, no such division can be made between the *atman* and the intelligence on the one hand and the mind and the senses on the other But the mind may be subject to the senses and the intelligence subject to the mind or the mind may be subject to the intelligence and the senses subject to the mind We are told that this last arrangement is the best and most conducive to our welfare

But if no more than this were contained in this verse it would not be much There must, therefore, be a more special meaning We must seek it out with close study Jnanadeva has made it explicit What this verse suggests, according to him, is fear Man is warned that he dare not be negligent even when he is on the point of attaining to the Steadfast Wisdom Jnanadeva says If a man of realization, through negligence or mistaken confidence, or through curiosity or an unhealthy interest, slackens the reins of the senses, his mind will get the upper hand and drag him along after it If we stop to consider how Jnanadeva arrived at this interpretation we shall see how astute he was This verse does not tell us that the mind drives the intelligence as wind drives a boat It says that wisdom, *prajna*, is to driven The word *prajna* has been used instead of the word *buddhi* Is this use of it without significance ? Jnanadeva derives his interpretation of this passage from the presence of the word *prajna* The mind can never, in any circumstances, be unleased The admonition given by Samartha Ramadasa in the "*manace sloka*" also tells us that when we have won all that is to be won, we must yet not relax our watchfulness, We must keep our grip on ourselves even after we have found the mystery Do not let go This is to say, we are told to keep the reins in our control even after the *buddhi* has stablished itself and become *prajna*, wisdom

In another place, however, Jnanadeva says something slightly different When the river approaches the sea its current slows down After the defeat of an enemy the conqueror's grasp on his sword loosens From this the conclusion is drawn that a person who has wisdom can afford to be careless In the passage we are studying Jnanadeva warns us that this is not the case How can these contradictory statements be reconciled ? They are reconciled in the vigilance which is the natural duty of the wise Samkaracarya express this in slightly different language in his

commentary on the *Brahma-Sutra* He asks "How can one who has achieved spiritual realisation move at his case ? Is pride not necessary for freedom of movement ?" This statement is full of significance One attains to the Steadfast Wisdom through the practice of self-control, Restrained conduct has become a habit, it is natural For one of Steadfast Wisdom there are no rules to be constantly remembered, nor does he have to restrain himself consciously He does not think of rules as being external to or separate from himself, precepts that must be obeyed The sun does not rise according to a rule, it rises because it is its nature to do so The Ganges does not flow according to law, it is its nature to flow Thus it is with the man of Steadfast Wisdom

Is sense mastery a burden to him ? On the contrary, senses which are not controlled are burdensome to him Suppose, for instance, a person, through arduous study, masters the science of mathematics He has become the best of mathematicians Will he, for that reason, say that for him the rules of mathematical procedure are no longer valid ? Will two and two cease to make four for him ? Will they make three ? Can he imagine such a thing ? His mathematics ends where such a thought begins Therein lies his mistake As long as sense-control is burdensome it is disagreeable To a *sadhaka* it is not disagreeable, Sense-control will, in the beginning, be difficult in some ways even for a *sadhaka* It will inevitably cause some heartburning, it is called "*tapa*" because it does If there is no fire at the source of sense-control how can there by any consuming ? But if, at the beginning, sense-control causes heartburning, *sadhaka* will not regard it as burdensome He feels elated Does a bag of candy seem burdensome to a traveller ? If sense-control does not seem burdensome to a *sadhaka* how can it be burdensome to one who has achieved the Steadfast Wisdom ?

Sense control, when it has become habitual, becomes a part of Steadfast Wisdom The mind is steadied and kept upright by means of it Therefore a person may not relax this control once his mind has been steadied A woodcutter can lop off all the branches of a tree except the branch upon which he is standing How can he cut that ? The man of steady mind cannot apply the axe to sense control because his steadiness is erected upon it as upon a base It is suicide for him to strike out at sense control This is what Jnanadeva says This does not mean that a man of

Steadfast Wisdom has to exert himself constantly to maintain sense control But, assuming that it is at all possible for such a man to relax his control, Jnanadeva says he will undermine the foundations of his wisdom if he does so This he cannot do This is the deeper implication of the verse we are considering

From one point of view it may be said that there is no need for a man of Steadfast Wisdom to engage in any *sadhana* or even to be vigilant Both appear necessary from the opposite point of view To reconcile these viewpoints I have said that vigilance is natural to the man of Steadfast Wisdom, an innate part of his disposition The contradiction can be resolved in another way also For many thousands of people impartial and natural vigilance is a mere aspiration The attainment of a complete understanding of the Steadfast Wisdom while incarnate in the flesh is, though not beyond our human powers, virtually impossible for most The higher the *sadhaka* rises in his realisation the more astute his understanding becomes He never arrives at a point of which he can feel that his undestanding is final This is beneficial For as long as we inhabit the body we should have scope to express ourselves and develop Not only that—the very fact that we are incarnate in the flesh at all, is proof of the incompleteness of our development We delight, as Tolstoy says, in the unending game of hide and seek between the object of our meditation and ourselves as meditator No sooner does the *sadhaka* think, "Now I am near the goal ! I'll touch it ! I'll touch it !" than the object of his meditation escapes, crying, "I'm away ! I'm away !" This makes our *sadhana* pleasant and exciting The *sadhaka*, therefore, is correctly reminded never to feel too sure, to be apprehensive But he should not fear that he will never obtain the object of his meditation By the grace of God he will His achievement vanishes, however, the moment he begins to think he has won and can safely relax He must never forget it It often happens that as a swimmer approaches the shore and is even able to touch it with his hand, the earth crumbles from his fingers, his hand slips away, and he is swept off by the current To be able to touch shore is not enough Only when a swimmer has touched bottom and planted his feet firmly on the ground can he be said to have safely reached the shore Therefore, a *sadhaka* should consciously retain his sense control to the very end

Thus the necessity of sense-control has been fully explained in

all its aspects There can now be no objection to the use of the word "*tasmat*", therefore

> tasmad yasya mahabaho nigrhitani sarvasah
> indriyani 'ndriyarthebhyas tasya prajna pratisthita [28]

"Therefore, O Mighty-armed (Arjuna), he whose senses are all withdrawn from their objects, his intelligence is firmly set " By the use of the word "*tasmat*" here the basic resolve is only reaffirmed In the science of logic this is called *nigamana*, the setting forth The basic proposition is set forth at the beginning, arguments are then advanced in its favour and the proposition reiterated at the end This is logical procedure When it is followed we arrive at a conclusion It is the Q E D of Euclid That is to say, the matter is settled The *Gita* does not follow the *sastra* procedure It does not wish to harass the mind of ordinary men with the unnecessary imposition of rigid rules Therefore, the *Gita*, while not ignoring the *sastra*, conducts its discussion in the form of a simple dialogue, using a manner easily understandable Yet the proprieties of the *sastra* canon need to be kept in mind because the subject under discussion is the theory and practice of sense control Another verse has, for this reason, been added

> yada samharate ca yam kurmo 'ngani 'va sarvasab,
> indriyani 'ndriyarthebhyas tasya prajna pratisthita [29]

This verse repeats what has been said before, only the metaphor of the tortoise has been omitted This is the *nigamana*

Two of the sections into which the characteristic features of the Steadfast Wisdom are classified have been considered Now we must look at the third and final section The first section contained four verses In it the Steadfast Wisdom was defined Three verses of the second section gave the science of self-mastery and its theoretical basis was expounded in another seven The nature and effect of the stability which constitutes the Steadfast Wisdom is now analyzed in the third and last section We are given a clear idea of its nature in the first three verses The last verse explains its effect

> ya nisa sarvabhutanam tasyam jagarti samyami,
> yasyam jagrati bhutani sa nisa pasyato muneh [30]

"What is night for all beings is the time of waking for the disciplined soul, and what is the time of waking for all beings is night for the sage who sees" This is the first verse of the last section Literally it means that a man of Steadfast Wisdom wakes while others sleep and sleeps while they wake Obviously this is to be understood symbolically, not literally Taken literally it will be found to refer to station masters, thieves and others whose profession keeps them awake nights Gandhi has taken some trouble to find an appropriate literal meaning He says that ordinary men pass the night in voluptuousness, falling asleep towards morning The man of wisdom, on the other hand, sleeps during the early part of the night and wakes before dawn, rising to pray and meditate But he pays no importance to such a literal interpretation He is aware that the verse has a deeper meaning and requirses to be interpreted in a deeper and more symbolic way Later he did it in his own manner

The comment made in this verse gives the attitude to life of a man of Steadfast Wisdom and shows us the way he regards it There is a great difference between the way an ordinary person regards life and a man of wisdom regards it There attitudes do not converge at any point' they are somewhat like parallel lines The attitude of the man of wisdom is the opposite of the other Mirabai says in one of her songs "*ulat bhai more nayanana ki*" (Alas, my vision is gone topsy-turvy His state is like hers His attitude is, actually, the straight one, his vision direct, not the reverse The worldly standpoint is the reversed one But because the majority think and speak of the wise man's attitude to life as inverted it has come to be accepted as such How can so many b. wrong ? M rabai therefore accepts what they say and describes her own attitude as an "inverted" one in her song When a person's basic concept of life changes, taking a direction opposite to that which it followed before and opposite also to the direction usually taken, all his activities fall in line

For example, food is necessary to sustain bodily life A man of wisdom does not abstain food He eats like any ordinary man Their outward activities appear to be the same But their attitudes to what they do, their assessments, their thoughts, are not the same The meal of a wise man is like a sacrament It is a rite performed for maintaining the bodily instrument The Upanisads and Samkaracarya speak of it as therapeutic, like

medicine Gandhi referred to it as the payment of rent for the house in which we dwell, or as scientists say, a machine must be kept oiled if it is to work properly The man of wisdom feeds the body in order to keep it healthy and capable of work The indulgence of appetite plays no part in his dining In the dining others there is gormandizing They are interested in food and take pleasure in it Much time, thought and labour are spent in the preparation of dishes pleasing to the taste How elaborate is the organization, how great the fuss !

With sleep it is the same Sleep is as necessary to bodily life as food Yet most people sleep out of sheer laziness They dream They waste their knowledge Not a single night passes without the loss of some knowledge Dreamless and innocent is the sleep of a man of wisdom His powers of discrimination and understanding grow even during slumber, undisturbed for a long stretch The seed is hidden in the soil It is there to sprout, to grow We see it grow New insights root and grow in man during periods of deep sleep This is the difference between the sleep of a man of slothful habits and a man ot wisdom The sleep of the one is conducive to waste and voluptuousness How can such sleep compare to the sleep during which an equilibrium of all the virtues is reached and we rest in our fundamental nature ? In outward appearance these two kinds of sleep may be alike What of that ?

In matters of daily conduct it is the same Many social and moral codes have been framed on imagined insult and honour A wise man is not aware either of honour of dishonour Men almost never deal simply and openly each other At every step they wrap up their mannners in hypocrisy and artificiality in the name of politeness In public assemblies a man shows himself in one guise, at social functions in another and in still another at home On festive occasions he is different again and yet another person on the playing field Lives are everywhere constumed, disguised with simulation and dissimulation, sham A man of wisdom is simple, natural, straightforward, open in his manner It is for this reason that even his daily conduct is so different from that of others, the reverse of theirs

Here we have, in our way, extracted a meaning from the imagery of the *Gita*, but what does the *Gita* itself say ? It does not appear to say anything It seems to be content with the

figures of speech it uses But this is not actually the case The *Gita*, as a *sutra*, concludes when the chief features of the Steadfast Wisdom have been given, in its second chapter Therefore, all that has been discussed up to this point is summed up in this verse We have discussed three things, firstly, the intelligence of the *samkhya*, without attributes, secondly, the attendent *yoga* and its virtues, and lastly, the combined effect of these two The essence of the three is presented here in the form of a metaphor

(1) By the *samkhya*—intelligence is meant knowledge of the true nature of the *atman* Why is so much emphasis laid on this knowledge from the very beginning ? Because this is something with which we are not unfamiliar The *atman* is not a stranger to me It is me And because it is, we find it all the more necessary to ascertain what it is before proceeding to discuss other subjects The *Gita* says, ' The *atman* neither slays nor is slain, neither does it cause to be slain" [31] Man's acts are performed in three ways He is the doer, he causes to be done and he is the object of what is done The *atman* is not concerned with any of these The *atman* is neither the doer nor the object of what is done, nor is it an agent, causing to be done The verb "to die" has been used to illustrate and reveal the deeper meaning of this statement It says that the *atman* is not touched in any way by any act whatsoever In Samkara's commentary this inactive nature of the *atman* has been caught as clearly as in a mirror The knowledge of the *atman's* true, inactive state is called light To regard the *atman* as the doer is, on the contrary, darkness This darkness envelops the lives of all living creatures But the life of the man of Steadfast Wisdom shines with the steady light of the *atman* This is the primary meaning of the verse under discussion Man imposes upon himself innumerable burdens, tying himself in knots with thoughts like the following "I have done such-and-such a thing My work is good I am the son of so-and-so I own such-and-such property This is what I look like I am so many years old I belong to such-and-such a caste " And so on A man of Steadfast Wisdom knows that none of these things are his His sole concern, his *dharma*, is to establish himself firmly in the *atman* This is the difference between his life and the lives of others. What shall I call it if not the difference between light and darkness ?

(2) The accompanying *yoga* If, because the *atman* is inactive, you cease to perform any outward labour you run the

risk of falling into the clutches of apathy and inertness If, on the other hand, you labour you run the risk of becoming involved in the toils of worldliness A trap is laid for you in both instances The *Gita* shows us a way out The sense of self-importance, of being the actor or the agent or the object of action, must be smashed to pieces whenever it waxes strong where does egoism entrench itself ? In respect of the fruits of labour "I have laboured and, therefore, have a right to receive the wages of my labour " In statements of this kind the sense of ownership, of personal possession, appears To forgo all claim to the fruits of one's labour is to renounce egoism, to give up one's conceit No sense of injured pride will remain if all hope of receiving any reward for one's labour is renounced totally The *Gita* says "You have acknowledged the inactivity of the *atman* The work that you do, therfore, is not yours The reward also is not yours From whence shall it come ?" This habit of thought cannot be cultivated by giving up all action The realization of the inactive nature of the *atman* starts, not in the refusal to work, but in the renouncement of all claims to the rewards of work In the *Gita* we are given our very first elementary lessons in the methods of acquiring this habit The incentive to work is in no way impaired by renouncing the rewards of labour Moral and social codes give us the right to enjoy the fruits of our labour But are you not a follower of the *Gita* ? You are fortunate in being its offspring ! Therefore, as a worthy son, you have the nobility required to renounce to fruits of your labour

The famous passage in which the *Gita* points the way to the renunciation of reward for labour is this, "*karmany eva 'dhikaras te ma phalesu kadacana*" [32] The exact meaning is very seldom understood It is taken to mean that a man has the right to work but not to the regards of his work In reply to the question as to why this should be so we are told that it is because the rewards of labour are not in man's hands They are determined by numerous external factors This is fatalism It is not totally without justification, but the arguments advanced in its favour are not conclusive If the reward of a man's labour is not in human hands neither is his labour Both are governed to some extent by external factors The rewards of labour have the same basis as labour itself If a man has the right to work he also has a right to the reward of his work, at least partly If a man has

no right to the rewards of his labour he has no right to labour either This interpretation, therefore, is not correct

Then what does this passage mean ? To find the meaning we must take the help of Sanskrit grammar "*Ma phalesu*" it is written here, not "*na phalesu*" The present tense, "*asti*" or "*bhvati*", is not used after "*ma*" Here the correct verbal form is "*astu*" or "*bhavatu*" The passage then becomes, '*karmani eva te adhikarah astu, phalesu ma astu*" This means , "You shall have the right to work, but not to the enjoyment of its fruit" What do we get when the passage is thus clarified according to the rules of grammar ? You have the right to work and, therefore, to the fruit but renounce all right to the fruit and retain only the right to work Why ? The *Gita* tells you that you are not the doer and this is confirmed by your knowledge of the *atman* Do not accept the fruit if you wish to experience your own freedom from involvement in the process

The part played by the man of Steadfast Wisdom in this respect is very different from the part played by ordinary men A person usually works for what the work brings him If it brings him nothing he does not work The matter might stop there but many carry it a step father "If", they say, "I can get the reward without working that is better still ' They work only if nothing is to be obtained without working but they never, in any circumstances, work for nothing This attitude is the chief cause of the unrest that is so prevalent everywhere in the world today The number of those who try to obtain the fruit of labour without engaging in any labour themselves is not small It is a practice that is not confined to a few bad people Government after government in country after country is doing it The Nazis ? The Fascists ? The capitalists ? The imperialists ? Other states have also been built upon this ignoble attitude And shis is true not only of the present day, though we see it now in an extreme and exaggerated form It has been in existence almost continuously from very early times The *Gita*, for this reason, refers to it as an *asuri* (demoniac) device and devotes sixteen whole chapters to its exposure and denunciation It is because society has come to a state in which one works and others enjoy the fruit of his labour that "The reward is the worker's" has come to be the premise of all social and ethical codes, mankind will be greatly blessed if it can be safeguarded in practice Social and ethical

codes lay so much stress upon it in order that men of worth may be accorded a high place in society The scope of ethical and social codes is limited today Current social practices fully justify the placing of such men in high positions

The *Gita*, however, takes its stand on a higher plane Whether its stand is considered workable or not does not matter, it must be understood The *Gita* says, ' If you wish to free yourself from the sense of injury which accompanies the conceit of regarding yourself as a 'doer', renounce of your own accord the fruit of your labour Consecrate it to God Donate it to society If you wish, you may cast it to the winds But do not keep it for yourself You must do this not because someone asks you to, but because it is in accord with your principles You know, through your knowledge of the *atman*, that the *atman* is not affected by any labour The way to keep it untouched is to renounce the fruit of labour " This is the fundamental precept of the *yoga* of disinterested labour as taught in the *Gita* The introduction of this doctrine at the outset of the *Gita* is considered by many to be quite pointless *Karma-yoga* should, they think, have been discussed first This is mistaken The *Karma-yoga* of the *Gita* can only stand if set upon the knowledge of the *atman* The *yoga* does not only tell people to work It teaches them to renounce the reward of their work Without the section devoted the knowledge of the *atman* the doctrine of the renunciation of the fruits of labour is meaningless Renunciation of labour itself is not possible because, though one may be the true aspect of the *atman*, for the time being one is confined within fleshly walls Work for reward is, on the other hand, incompatible with the true nature of the *atman* I am convinced that I am not a "doer", that I am inactive As long as the body is retained there is no respite from labour itself An impasse As a way out of this impasse the *Gita* teaches us to renounce voluntarily the reward of out work, adding this theory to *karma-yoga*, the path of work. The doctrine of the rewardless work is derived from the inactive nature of the *atman* logically according to the rules of rhetoric, just as subsidiary theorems are derived from a proposition of Euclid You may jest about it if you like Let us study the passage, "*ya nisa sarvabhutanam*", from the standpoint of *karma-yoga* It can be interpreted to mean that people ordinarily sleep over their duties and are wakeful with regard to their dues,

The man of Steadfast Wisdom, on the other had, sleeps over his dues and is wakeful in matters of duty This is an appropriate interpretation,

A third interpretation can be given it with reference to the chief characteristics of the Steadfast Wisdom The three interpretations are, basically, one and the same, differing only as perspectives In describing the mastery of the senses as one of the chief characteristics of the Steadfast Wisdom we have seen that the indulgence of the senses results in the destruction of the mind and that self-control is essential to mental stability Accordingly a man of Steadfast Wisdom is wakeful in matters concerning sense-mastery and sleeps over indulgence Ordinarily people do exactly the opposite, sleeping over self-control and responsive to any opportunity for indulgence

These three interpretations are brought together here in a single figure of speech If we examine the three words "*pasyan*" "*muni*" and "*samyami*" we shall discover if there is any proof that our understanding of this passage is correct From the word, "*pasyan*", we get the description of a man with knowledge of the *atman* whose mind is fixed on *samkhya-buddhi*, from the word, "*muni*", we get the *karma-yoga* intent upon his labours, and from "*samyami*" we get the steadfastness of the wisdom which unites the foregoing—the wisdom which is the subject of our discourse Thus these three words are in harmony with the three interpretations we have given The most obvious meaning of the figure of speech used in this verse is, however, that a man of Steadfast Wisdom has an outlook on life completely different from that of the ordinary man These three interpretations must not be taken separately Let us unite them in a single concept that shall apply to life as a whole This is what we did at the beginning If one goes deep enough he will also find that each of the three, by itself, affects life as a whole

In the verse we are to consider now the Steadfast Wisdom is described in yet another way Let us understand the verse first

apuryamanam acalapratistham
samudram apah pravisanti yadvati,
tadvat kama yam pravisanti sarve
sa santim apnoti na kamakami [33]

"He attains peace unto whom all desires enter as waters into the

sea which though ever being filled is ever motionless, and not he who clings to his desires "

The first sentence ends with "*apnoti*" The second sentence is "*na kamakami*" By "*apuryamanam*" is meant that which is constantly filled from all sides, but which never exceeds its boundaries nor leaves its own place When the word '*api*" is inserted the passage reads as follows "*apuryamanam api acalapratistham*" All waters flow into the sea The sea accepts them, taking them to itself, but it neither overflows nor leaves its place. Likewise, the man of Steadfast Wisdom accepts the desires that flow into him from all directions but he is not disturbed by them He stays in his place and keeps within bounds Therefore, he is at peace. Those who run after their desires are not at peace This is the literal meaning of this verse It is beautifully composed but a little difficult to decipher

First we must give attention to the meaning of the word "*kama* " It is used in the singular when the chief characteristics of the Steadfast Wisdom are enumerated Elsewhere it is used in the plural In the phrase, "*sangat sanjayate kamah*" the word "*kama* " is in the singular Here it means a fundamental deflection or deviation Out of this deviation irrelevant desires are born. In the plural the word is used at the beginning of the passage, "*prajahati yada kaman*"[34], and again at the end of the phrase, "*vihaya kaman yah sarvan* "[35] In both instances it can mean only one thing, desire, *kamana* These desires, being emotional in their inception, can and should be renounced It is imperative to do so A man of Steadfast Wisdom does Used in the plural, the world has another connotation In the phrase, "*kama yam pravisanti*", it does not mean desires, which are emotional in their inception According to the etymology "*kamyante iti kamah*" the world "*kama*" means things which are desired In this context it therefore means objects of desire, material things which can be enjoyed In the Upanisads also "*kama*" is used in this sense Yama tempts Naciketa by saying, "I shall give you all that is desirable and enjoyable in the world "[36] In the passage under discussion it is also used in this sense The word "*kama*" is, we therefore, find, employed to denote three things: (1) a basic deviation or aberration, (2) desires which are emotional in their inception, and (3) material objects and their enjoyment Material objects are thought of as auxiliary to desires because they awaken desires in

the heart and mind But the objects are not themselves the source of the desires they awaken, they are only the agents The source of our desires is to be found in old and new perceptions, things done in former lives, and the beliefs and observances arising out of these Material objects, therefore, are the cause of enjoyment and of the desire to enjoy

All created things enter continually into the Steadfast Wisdom, just as all the waters of the earth flow continually into the sea Sounds present themselves to the ear and visual objects to the eye But even as all waters are absorbed into the sea and partake of its nature, becoming one with it, so likewise are things received into the Steadfast Wisdom, merged with it, and take it nature Whatever the eye beholds, whatever the ear hears, whatever is perceived by the other senses, is transmuted into the true nature of the *atman* The heart and mind remain unaffected The influence of material things, both as attraction and as aversion, is felt as pain Material things cannot be eliminated entirely, whatever attitude one may take towards the objects themselves one's feelings about them, or to both combined. This is an undeniable fact for if, to insure sense control, we decide to destory material things we shall have to destory the entire world This is neither possible nor necessary For even though outer things enter into a man of Steadfast Wisdom through the door of his senses, they do not disturb him His equanimity is unaffected In this lies his greatness Material things need not be given up It is the various desires of the heart that must be destroyed This is done very early in the descipline of such a man He does not need to kept his distance from anything He will retain his composure even though placed in the midst of material splendour The ethical question will at once arise Has he lost his moral sense of discrimination as to what is acceptable and what is not ? The answer is that it is not the purpose of this verse to determine what is ethically acceptable and what is not The greatness of spiritual knowledge, of the *atma* is shown to us and praised The greatness of the man of Steadfast Wisdom is also shown and praised

The composure of a man of Steadfast Wisdom may be described in two ways For him to act at all, even in the purest manner, is from one point of view impossible From another point of view, even forbidden acts are possible He abstains from all action on the one hond and, on the other, all action is permissible

to him, bad as well as good His state can, therefore, be described in opposite terms We say that he does nothing He does not lift a finger He does not bother even to do good We also say he can set the three worlds on fire These statements are not contradictory The glory of the part played by the man of Steadfast Wisdom consists in exactly this It is revealed by the disagreements we find in conflicting commentaries Samkaracarya is a famous exponent of the doctrine of *mukti* or liberation and therefore favour abstention from all activity He says it is impossible for a wise man to do anything, but he adds "A wise man may participate in all things, even forbidden things, and yet not be the agent or the doer" Will a wise man really do a thing that is forbidden ? He will be told that here ethical and unethical matters are not the subject of discussion The greatness of spiritual knowledge is being decribed If Samkaracarya is asked what a wise man should do he will answer that, in his opinion, a wise man should do nothing, not even a good and pure act He will do absolutely nothing He will not even move When the commentator is accused of going to the other extreme he will again answer that he is describing the true nature of wisdom and is not concerned with ethics That is to say, in one case he has described the greatness of wisdom and in the other its true nature In its true nature wisdom is inactive, it does nothing And its greatness lies in the fact that even forbidden acts are permissible to it The ethical code of a man of Steadfast Wisdom is situated midway between these two extremes the greatness of wisdom and its true nature

What does midway mean ? It is a bit difficult to give an exact answer The more highly developed a society becomes the more penetrating will be the insight of its wise men Wisdom will grow clearer, more definitive, proportionately as society evolves and its perception multiply That is to say, within the framework of detachment, of work will continue to change If society is more advanced today than it used to be the wise men of today are wiser than the wise men of old To say so may seem extremely presumptuous The truth of such a statement is, however, obvious when one thinks about it The progressive development of wisdom must be accepted in its plainest sense It is external, not inner For the inner features of the Steadfast Wisdom will always be the same Its equanimity is enduring and stable, it is imperturbable This is what distinguishes

it from all other things Ethics for such a man means acting in a way that protects and preserves this composure He is the best judge of what he should or should not do There is no way of codifying his conduct in a permanent set of rules that all can understand

From the discourses of those who practise the *yogas* of *bhakti* and of work we see that the matter is only confused further when the help of the imagination alone is taken and not the support of our deepest perceptions For example, *bhaktas* find no difficulty in accepting the fact that Krisna was an adulterer, though they are gracious enough to regard him as uninvolved in spite of it In claiming that his detachment was so great that even his adultery was transmuted through it they demonstrate only the unseemliness of their own devotion What *karma-yogi* can put into practice, literally, the doctrine that all things are aspects of God ? A person of the most Steadfast Wisdom, a person imbued with the deepest feeling, may wage a most violent and mortal war Instead of making the ethics of the Steadfast Wisdom more explicit they have only given expression to the exuberance of their imagination The *bhakta* quote the *Bhagavata* and the *karma-yogis* quote the *Mahabharata* Both find support for their theories But the real test is the experience of today, of society at the present time, our own experience Observations based on this experience are alone of value to us This is valid, of course, only in relation to the present, the time closest to us It does not apply to the future If, however, the inner features that characterize the Steadfast Wisdom are the same at all times, present and future, as we have seen that they are, we can discover what its ethics are also in the past, present and future This is in the verse, "*ya nisa sarva-bhutanam*" That is to say conscience constitutes its ethics

The meaning of the verse under discussion gives rise to apprehension in some and particular satisfaction in others Moralists are afraid that a strange ethical idea has been presented in it If a man of Steadfast Wisdom behaves as suggested no morality will remain And others find particular satisfaction in it because, they think, once a man attains to the Steadfast Wisdom he can take all things to himself, like the sea, and may behave in any way he likes, without any inhibitions This verse does not, in fact, give any cause for either apprehension or satisfaction For, as we have seen, though all things do certainly enter into the

man of Steadfast Wisdom, he remains unaffected by them This description of him was given to illustrate the greatness of his nature, without any reference to ethics The verse may be construed in yet another way, and this way gives out its true purpose What is more important here than the description is the attitude towards what is described It must be duly noted Though the Steadfast Wisdom is one and the same for all the approaches to it are many One approach is that of the *karma-yogi*, another that of the *dhyana-yogi* "*Ya nisa sarva-bhutanam*" gives the approach of the *karma-yogi*, the approach through conduct The alertness of his conscience is described, the wakefulness of his mind He is vigilant in matters of right and wrong The duty of a *karma-yogi* is to discover the good and single it out for acceptance while, at the same time, rejecting the bad The verse which uses the metaphor of the sea gives us the approach of the *dhyana-yogi* Here we contemplate it in all its vastness and meditate upon its divine character The whole cosmos is encompassed by the nobility and sweep of the vision In its immensity all is good, all pure, all beneficent.

Evil does not have a separate existence of its own Evil takes its rise from goodness By evil is meant the shadow of good A shadow does not destroy anything, nor does it bring about differentiation On the countrary the outlines of an object are thrown into relief by a shadow, more clearly marked A picture drawn on white paper without colour will not be visible to the eye The paper will stay white Good, by itself, remains unexpressed, invisible It will have no form Evil is born out of the desire to give form and expression to good A man's shadow has no value of its own, it is not worth anything There are, say, fifty prisoners They have fifty a hundred or a hundred and fifty shadows When the prisoners are counted no one counts a hundred or a hundred and fifty A shadow is not a separate entity, it does not exist in its own right It is, essentially, a lack In order to describe darkness we say it is an absence of light Darkness itself is not an object Light is The function of darkness is to reveal light The function of evil is to reveal the good Therefore, evil does not alarm a wise man The goodness of his impulses is not destroyed by it He knows that evil is helpful to good, it gives it form and shape, makes it attractive To his way of thinking, a way which takes all things into consideration,

good and evil are alike acceptable to creation No, to his way of thinking, good and evil, added together, equal good In mathematical terms the equation is good+evil good This is so because evil=0 What need is there for his zero ? Why is it wanted ? It is algebra Zero has no value of its own It indicates nothing What of that ? Put a zero after 1 and it becomes 10 Placed beside 1 it enhances the value of 1 Even seems somehow beautiful because it enhances the beauty of the good

If anyone, misled by an evil inclination, thinks this doctrine a convenient one and assents to the commingling of good and evil he commits suicide Good mixed with evil is evil Rice with which poison has been mixed is poisonous Therefore, whoever attempts to establish an ethical code on the basis of a commingling of good and evil takes the path of self-destruction A man of wisdom looks at the matter differently He does not accept evil as good He is not in the least attracted by evil He never, in the course of his work, mistakes evil for good This we have already seen But there is a difference between what he does and how he regards what he does. Of the bad as well as of the good he says, "Come to me, both of you You are mine " If they protest, saying, "We are evil", he answers, "You are not really bad even though you say so Call yourselves good " And even after this, if they insist that they are bad, he purifies them His way of looking at the world is such that bad is transmuted into good Evil is a mistake, an error, no more lasting than a ghost The wise man says "All of you are good There is nothing wrong with you There is now flow in you " To those who persist in saying that they have erred, he says, "I shall give you a *mantra* and show you the way to spiritual discipline" He does this only to exercise evil Evil is false, *sadhana* is false, the destruction of evil is false Good only is true One who sees nothing in the world but good finds peace Need this be said ?

vihaya kaman yah sarvan pumams carati nihsprhah,
nirmamo nirahamkarah sa santim adhigacchati [37]

"He who abandons all desires and acts free from longing, without any sense of mineness or egotism, he attains to peace "

This verse brings the discussion of the Steadfast Wisdom to a conclusion The discussion opened with the injunction to renounce desire, for the renunciation of desire is the first of the characteristics

of the Steadfast Wisdom It is brought to a conclusion with the same injunction He also gives up all desire and becomes dispassionate, *nihsphra*, finds peace This is the last word *Sprha* means desire or longing Desire was given up at the start What is the need of referring to it once more here ? A man is told to abandon all desires and he also free from longing There is no redundancy or repetition here for, in this context, *sprha* means the deepest and fundamental of all desires, the desire to live itself It is introduced here according to the practice which is known as "*brahmana-parivrajaka*" Brahmin priests are invited to a feast "Have all the *brahmanas* come"? the host inquires politely while they are dining ' Yes, they have all come", he is told Again he inquires, ' The *samnyasis* ?" The reply is, "Yes, they also have come " The *samnyasis* are included among the *brahmanas* Yet, in order to show them special honour the host inquires after them separately The word *sprha* is introduced here in like manner. When the statement is made that all desires have been renounced, the question is asked, 'The desire to live, *sprha*, has also been renounced, hasn't it ?" The answer is, Yes" The reason why *sprha* is noticed specially is that the desire to live may linger after all other desires have departed Therefore, the question is asked, "Has *sprha* also gone ?"

By surrendering the desire to live do we mean that a person desires to die ? No The desire to die departs with the desire to live "Does anyone ever desire to die ?" is a question that must be asked The answer is that sometimes a person does desire to die We find that men commit suicide A man of wisdom, however, is never fed up or disgusted with life That does not mean that he becomes indifferent to life as a whole Occasionally an old man is heard to say, "Not many days are left ! Two-thirds of my life are gone and only one-third remains " All taste for life has dried up in such a person He is indifferent. The attitude of a man of wisdom is diametrically opposed to this, He loses all fear of death because he has conquered all attachment to life, but joyousness remains, the delight of the game Life becomes for him a sport Later in the Tenth Sections the characteristics of a *bhakta* are described thus *tusyanti ca ramanti ca* [38] The *bhakta* is happy and contented therefore he plays Tukaram puts it this way *tuka mhane mukti parinili novari atam dis cari kheli meli* "You are wedded to *mukti*, freedom You are. therefore, engaged in sweet converse with your bride, a converse that is continuous,

taking place at all times and in all places Your life is blissfully happy "

The desire to live is, really, the fear of death These are but two aspects of the same thing A soldier, when he goes to war, keeps himself amused with merry-making, laughter, joking, dancing Pascal says that he behaves in this way because death is a constant presence to him In order to forget it he creates a semblance of merriment The desire to live or, in other words, the fear of death, is a pricking thorn in his heart To numb the pain he produces in himself a condition bordering on madness His gaiety is frenzied This kind of pretended happiness is common enough We see an apparently jolly person who is full of fun and laughter But when we come to know him better we find that he is sad at heart He deliberately creates an atmosphere that helps him to forget his sorrow The most painful of all the sorrows that afflict man is attachment to life It causes him pain up to the last, until death intervenes, and it pursues him even after death Therefore he strives frantically to forget it, devising artificial pleasures and arranging festivals and ceremonies of various kinds But the sorrow of a person who gives up all desire to live disappears of itself Living then is no longer painful All anxiety comes to an end Life becomes pure delight

This is the secret of children's happiness They do not worry about life Their unconcern arises from ignorance It is true, nevertheless, that they do not worry A child is easily absorbed in his play, forgetting even hunger and thirst His mother remembers for him The child does not brother about it at all This unconcern of the child is unconscious while the unconcern of the man of wisdom is a consciously achieved condition In other respects their unconcern is the same All this is implied in the word, "*carati*" "*Carati*" means to play and jump about No trace of sorrow mars the life of one so engaged

The subject of a discourse is repeated at the end In the phrase, "*prajahati yada kaman*", the subject is not simply restated In the original proposition we are not told merely to renounce desire The second characteristic of Steadfast Wisdom, self-contentment of spirit, is added to it Both these have to be present in the conclusion After all desires have been renounced the wise man plunges into the inner steam of joyousness that rises within him This is indicated here fly the word *carati*" Distilled inner

inner joy, self-contentment, is left when all desires are gone

The word, "*carati*", is commonly understood in another sense Tilak analyses in his commentary on the *Gita* The phrase "*visayan caran*" is used in a previous verse Tilak thinks that the "*carati*" here is to be understood with reference to it The meaning of "*carati*" thus becomes to use the senses in an appropriate manner, with mastery This is not incorrect The man of wisdom does not refrain from using his senses He cannot stop seeing with his eyes or hearing with his ears He does these things for the take of rendering service But this interpretation of "*carati*" is not dispensable in this verse The verse sums up the meaning of the Steadfast Wisdom clearly and succintly The phrase, "*visayan caran* ", adds nothing to it "*Caran*" is transitive and "*carati*" intransitive To read associated meanings into a verse without good cause is not advisable

According to the Srutis yet another meaning is implicit here *Samnyasis* are to shun the company of men and wander constantly from one place to another The word, "*carati*", recalls this injunction The *Gita*, however, makes no attempt to frame rules for the man who has attained to the Steadfast Wisdom He has passed beyond the stage at which rules are necessary The rules given in the Srutis are for *asrama* discipline They are framed according to the needs of the *sadhaka* He is to keep moving from place to place in order to keep himself free from entanglements As he gains experience he will become more and more detached until at last he will be able to keep himself free wherever he lives Until then he must follow this rule Who can lay down such a rule for a man of wisdom ? He has no need of rules at all He makes his own The *Gita* makes no attempt to define the character of a wise man by rules, to do so is crude But if anyone wishes to see in the word "*carati*" a reference to the rules given in the Srutis for *asrama-samnyas's* he may do so, treating it as symbolic The word should not, however, be taken so literally in this place

Here, as later in connection with the characteristics of a *bhakta*, it is the cryptic characteristic, "*aniketah sthiramatih*", to which reference is made Literally this phrase means "one without a home" That is to say, one who moves constantly from one place to another But Jnanadeva extracts from this phrase another and more appropriate meaning Like the wind which stops

nowhere, the *sadhaka* does not build a shelter for himself in any one place One who is at home in the whole of creation cannot be homeless He contains within himself all the moves and all that does not move Jnanadeva obtained this by the following logic He construes the word, *carati*, to mean one who, having himself become the universe, moves freely about in it This interpretation is both easy to understand and in consonance with the literal meaning of the word Jnanadeva has displayed great penetration In Sanskrit the wanderings of a wise man are called his "*vihara*" North of Benares there is a province by that name Rare indeed is it for a province to be named after the wanderings of a wise man Our pious forefathers named Bihar in memory of the Buddha *Vihara* means moving about freely and lightheartedly, games, sport, play It is this meaning which is indicated here by "*carati*" Life becomes a pleasant game when all desires have come to an end, even the will to live itself

The question will be asked What can there be for one to do who has only the body left, even whose will to live is gone ? This question is often raised in theological discussions The assumption is that nothing exists that has nothing to do Tukaram gives the answer *tuka mhane atam*, *uralom upakarapurata* The wise man is steadfast because he is permeated with the whole of creation He himself and his lunguage cease to exist "I do not exist", he says, "nor is anything mine All that is belongs to you It is you Understand and take charge " This reading is borne out by the phrase which follows it *nirmamo nirahamkarah* The wise man lives in order to benefit living creatures He has no social ties whatsoever even though his body may be obliged to perform certain social duties No one should therefore assume that, though he has foregone all other desires, he retains any social ambition Social ambition is included in the "all" when we say "all desires" He gave it up with the others How then can he engage in social activity ? His role as a *sadhaka* and the existence of social need combine to make him do it The inspiration which made him become a *sadhaka* has become a part of his nature, it is part of his make-up The stream of social need flows continually These two compel him to work Again and again he is caught up in the strem But what is there surprising in the fact that a man so contituted should find peace ? He has a right to peace All causes of unrest have been eliminated from his life Egoism and

conceit are gone, attachment is gone desire for good and evil is gone, the will to live is gone Where then can unrest find a foothold ? Only peace remains

The forgoing has described how a man of wisdom feels Now the nature of his wisdom is given It appear to the complete opposite of what he feels All desires, good and bad, are permitted entrance into his feeling Both good and bad are excluded here The knowledge of a man of widom transcends both good and evil Not the slightest trace of a conflict remains There is neither vision nor creation, neither this nor that There is no designation, no form No quality, no activity No classification, nor individuation Nothing ordinary and nothing extraordinary There is no perception, no emotion No intellect, no pride Then what is there ? Nothing which can be described, for there is nothing left to be said Conditions are not the same where something remains to be said It is mistaken to think that there is even a sense of self-existence Neither can it be called a void But of course it is something That is certain The sense of being, of existence, pauses, awe-struck All urge to action is extinguished More need not be said about this state for not all that has been said can throw any light upon it

God becomes for the man of wisdom the cosmos, replete and complete A sense of wholeness enters into his feelings There is no fragmentation If a person breaks the nose off a beautiful statue and brings, is to me with the question, "Is this beautiful ?" I shall answer that the statue as a whole was beautiful, intact Its beauty consists in its wholeness If it is broken into pieces the piece are not beautiful by themselves The cosmos, as a whole, comprising both good and bad is benignant It is by such thoughts that one is prepared to lose oneself in this cosmos, this is the way it is worshipped and loved "Worship the god and you will behold him !" What you worship seems beautiful to you "Sow the seed ! God to the field !" If you go to the field without sowing the seed you will find it the playground of weeds If you hang out a veil of pure thought and look at the world through it, the world will appear pure to you A mother dresses her child with love and the child therefore, appears well-dressed and beautiful to her Clothe creation with spiritual contemplation, adorn it and then look at it with love It

will be beautiful and dear

A state of activity, a state dominated by conscience, a state difference from both of those described, is referred to in the line, *ya nisa sarvabhutanam* Here good and evil are in conflict Longing is at loggerheads with disinterestedness activity with passivity, selflessness with selfishness, right with wrong, light with darkness

Men of wisdom find themselves in one or the other of these three tates because, and as, long as they are in the body These states come and go, making their own way, without causing by disturbance to their inclinations It is not really correct to speak of ' inclination'', for a man of wisdom has none The Great Spirit at whose instance the world revolves knows what ought and ought not to be done The man of wisdom, therefore, stands steadfast The work which God wishes to accomplish through him will be accomplished in a manner determined by social need He does nothing of his own accord Water goes where the gardener directs it If it is poured into a field of sugar cane the sweetness of the cane increases If it is poured into a field of mustard the tang of the mustard is sharper If it is poured into a field of onions their smell is stronger Sugar cane, mustard and onions all grow in a field but they do not taste alike Water goes where it is taken A man of wisdom shows no preference for the performance of one act in contrast to another, he is not eager to do anything nor does he refuse to do anything God does through him what is to be done He has no likes and dislikes of his own Therefore, his steadfastness is correctly described as dispassionate But if we wish to use the word dispassionate we must specify by it undivided passion, passion as a whole Because he is incarnate in the body a man of wisdom experiences three states or conditions of being the state of feeling, the state of knowledge and the state of activity These three do not conflict with each other No rift is caused by them in a wise man's passion He discriminates between good and bad in his activity In his feeling he gathers all to his breast In his knowledge he perceives that nothing is his own Thus, he plays three roles I call them the trinity of the Steadfast Wisdom

The three aspects of Steadfast Wisdom which we have studied are to be regarded as equivalent to the three aspects of God The three states or conditions of being form a trinity because God, in

his true nature, is a trinity This is the central principle of our approach to the study of the Steadfast Wisdom No one has ever seen God One might just as well say no one has ever seen man Man's outward aspect is visible and the outward aspect of God is also visible The true nature of man is inner and, like the true nature of God, unmanifest Man's outward aspect, being the lesser, seems understandable God's outward aspect is the whole of visible creation It is, therefore, beyond the grasp of the mind Actually the extent to which both God and Man are manifest and unmanifest is the same Just as there is a way, a *sadhana*, through which we can come to know man there is also a way at, *sadhana*, through which we can come to know God That *sadhana* is the Steadfast Wisdom We have no hesitation in saying that as long as men who have attained this wisdom appear among us, we shall have a means of coming to know the true nature of God In every place and at all times it will be at our service Therefore, such a person should be looked upon as God incarnate, in the microcosm The three states of this wisdom reflect the three aspects of God Together they reflect His wholeness All that can be conceived and all that cannot be conceived are contained within it

The first of God's aspects is unmixed Good It is to be found in the aspirations of men Men's aspirations are always good Even one who does evil aspires to do good A liar does not wish to be himself deceived A violent man does not wish to be subjected to violence himself Out of this human aspiration to the good ethics are born It may be difficult to ascertain exactly that constitutes the good but something called the good undoubtedly exists And it is dear to man The Lord gives hope not only to Arjuna but to the whole of mankind when, after describing the virtues of the divine inheritance, he says, "Arjuna, you are born into the property "

It is true that faults are to found in man These are not the humanity of man, but beastliness in human shape Humanity is good, aspires to good, and makes its way forward progressively towards the good The heart of humanity is made of goodness We are told *hrddese arjuna tisthati* [39]

The second aspect of God is the cosmic one It is an integrated whole Good and evil both have a place in it An orange contains seeds, juice, the membranes which divide the flesh of the fruit into sections and the peel An orange can be sour, bitter or

sweet three flavours All these things together constitute an organe If I am asked what an orange is like I shall take all of them into consideration before I answer, "Good, sweet, juicy" To one who eats an orange its seeds and its peel are of no importance These are accessory, secondary The orange does not lose or gain in quality because of them This, let me repeat, is looking at orange the the human standpoint To the fruit itself the seed is more important than anything else An example is to be taken, not in detail, but in a general way As a whole the world is good, as tasty as an orange Evil is accessory to it, a shadow which brings out and emphasizes the good The universe, in its entirety, comprises good and evil, juice and peel It clothes itself with them Both fear and love are born of it In the Eleventh Chapter of the *Gita* we are told that Arjuna was overawed In the *Bhagavata* we are told that Prahlada was inspired with love It is both thrilling and terrible like the sea, like the Himalayas, attractive and repulsive Therefore, Siva is described as of dual aspect, beneficent and terrible, tranquil and furious Not alone but together these constitute Siva

The third aspect of God is beyond good and evil Beyond creation, beyond mind, beyond aspiration But, though beyond all things, it is at one and the same time the foundation of all things, the support, the base It cannot be described It is neither good nor evil Only negative terms can be used in reference to it The only affirmative statement possible is that it *is* All else is "*neti, neti*" (Not this, not that) The Vedanta ascribes ***brahma-samjnana***, awareness of ***brahman***, to it

The *Gita* describes the triune aspect of God in various places The first aspect is presented as human aspiration It is unqualified good The *bhaktas* think of it as four-square Because it is equated with human aspiration it constitutes the true aspect of man As it is not fully articulated in man's outward life two armatures have been added to make it four-square To behold God in this fourfold version is to experience in your heart His purity His goodness, His righteousness, His benignity These are, together, called *sat* This is the *sat* of the phrase, ***Om-tatsat***, of the *Gita* It is four square, moral in character The second or cosmic aspect we find in the *Gita's* Eleventh Chapter Good and evil are both present It is distinguished by its intactness, its wholeness The sastra name given to it is *sadasat* The phrase

in which this, the cosmic or created aspect, is described as *sadasac caham arjuna*.[40] The third aspect is beyond all attributes. There is no form, no deviation, no category. But it is the matrix of all things. The *Gita* designates it as *na sat tan nasad ucyate*.[41] The Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Chapters are given to its explanation.

The three states or conditions of being which comprise the Steadfast Wisdom correspond to the three aspects of God. *Sadasat* can, for the sake of argument, be divided into four parts: (1) unmitigated good, (2) unmitigated evil, (3) *sadasat*, and (4) *na sat, nasat*. But only three of these four are applicable to God. The fourth, unmitigated evil cannot be ascribed to Him. It belongs to Satan alone. God had no fourth aspect. Therefore, the Steadfast Wisdom also has no fourth aspect.

There is a verse to this effect in the Ninth Chapter. The verse is not at all a simple and easy one. It is one of the very special verses Vyasa has put into the *Mahabharata*. Commentators interpret it each in his own way. To me it appears that it deals with the subject we are studying.

> jnanayajnena capy anye yajanto man upasate,
> ekatvena prthaktvena, bahudha visvatomukham.[42]

(Others again sacrifice with the sacrifice of widom and worship me as the One, as the Distinct and as the Manifold, facing in all directions.)

Literally this verse means that one who worships God with the sacrifice of wisdom, worships Him as the Manifold, the Single and the Diverse, all facets of his vast true nature. Those who worship Him in this way are not separate individuals, the same person worships in three different ways. To worship Him as Single, a Unit, *na sa tan nasad ucyate*, is to realize the *advaita* or monistic character of the knowledge of the attributeless Brahman. To worship God as unmitigated good is to worship Him as sepprate, diverse. And to worship Him as something in which both good and evil play a part, is to worship Him as Manifold.

All three of these realizations can come to the same person. He beholds God as unmitigated good while in a state of activity. His role is to discriminate, to distinguish, to judge. There are some who interpret worship of God as distinct, to mean that the

worshipper is distinct and separate from God and is worshipped accordingly This is not correct, for ordinary *bhakti* is not so described What is described here is not ordinary *bhakti* but worship through knowledge *Bhakti* is described in the verse beginning *satatam kirtanyanto man*[43] This give as much opportunity as you like for *dvaita,* dualism There is no need to introduce it at this point For we are discussing the Yoga of Knowledge It is correct here to state that the worship of God in diversity is to worship Him by discriminating between good and evil, through judgment He is worshipped as attired in the celestial vestments of both good and evil when He is worshipped as Manifold This is the conception of a man of Steadfast Wisdom, the idea behind his worship Out of it springs an attitude of amity, of friendliness, towards all created things, This verse, understood in this way, is found to be in harmony with the triune aspect of God as given in the *Gita*

Every man of wisdom plays all three roles in his lifetime For one, however activity will be chief, for another emotional realizaion, and for another knowledge A corresponding difference appears in externals These do not indicate that a man experiences only one of these states of being however He does, in fact, experience all three And the experience, ordinarily, is a single one Differences are attributable to the dominance of one aspect of it This gives rise to confusion and people make the mistake of drawing comparisons between one wise man and another According to their own preferences they refer to one as greater than the other It is an illusion to think so No external difference is of any importance as long as inner qualities are the same Five rupees is five rupess whether it is in coins or in a note The difference is only a matter of form The man of Steadfast Wisdom will attract people equally no matter which of his three roles is uppermost He attracts because his knowledge is spiritual This spiritual knowledge is a constant and unchanging in all his three roles

Another question arises here Are these three states of being which constitute the Steadfast Wisdom related to each other? Are they as distinct and separate from each other as the states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep? A man is not wakeful when he sleeps He does not sleep when he is awake and when he dreams he is neither awake nor asleep Are the three states of

knowledge, of activity, of emotional realization connected with each other or are they as distinct as sleeping, waking, dreaming ? The comparison is not valid A man of wisdom also sleeps, wakes and dreams, just as other people The conditions we are discussing belong to the waking state And waking, sleeping and dreaming will be found, on close study, not to be wholly unrelated Our sleep is very much influenced by our waking, and our waking by our sleep After a good sleep one is well awake, alert If one is very alert while awake he sleeps well afterwards Dreams likewise cannot but influence our waking and what happens while we are awake influences our dreams A wise man experience three states of being while he is awake. One state is certain to influence the other It is not possible that any one of the three should not be affected by the other two

"The pandits regard brahmins, cows, elephants, dogs and *candalas* as all the same " This statement, which is made in the *Gita*,[44] needs to be examined Some Vedantins declare that it is true of the state of feeling and not the state of activity We may feel towards all these in exactly the same way but when it comes to actuol practice distinctions must be made Men must be dealt with as men and cattle as cattle The man of wisdom does not agree with these pandits To discriminate in one's actions while claiming unity of feeling or attitude is to graft the bark of a peepul on a banyan Sanatanists follow this logic when they claim that they do not make any distinction between brahmins and untouchables, they judge With a judgment, they say, there can be no disagreement Let us look more closely at their argument. The state of one's being should logically harmonize with what one does, the role he is playing at the moment To assume that the various states are unrelated to each other is wrong Feeling influences action, actions influence feeling, knowledge most certainly influences both Knowledge and feeling are not negligible They are not like a box of matches that one can keep in one's pocket and take out to light as one chooses They are inextricably fused with life

Let us, to begin with, compare the state of feeling or emotional realization with the state of activity We shall find that the feelings exert an influence even in the operation of the conscience and the conscience belongs to activity, I wish to wear gold on my finger Gold in any shape will not fit it The gold

must be made into a ring of the right size It is of no use to me until it has been made into a ring I shall not accept it Neither will I throw it away only because it is not a suitable shape I know the value of gold My feelings tell me that all that exists, both good and bad, is a manifestation of God, unalloyed gold Take a meeting of good people by way of example A chairman is required These good people will choose as their chairman some man of wisdom They will not elect a bad man But, even though they may not elect a bad man as their chairman they will not take a censorious attitude to him A bad man also is a manifestation of God The good are God in another form For a gathering of good men the appropriate chairmanis a good man and, therefore, one is selected A wise man, in what he does, makes no distinctions He acts in full awareness of the ultimate unity within And he takes care to see that this consciousness is unimpaired although his actions may take different forms He looks upon all with an equal eye He does not, therefore, give the same medicine to a person suffering from plague and a person suffering from tuberculosis. He must fit action to circumstance But he knows inwardly that, although his action in one set of circumstances may differ from his action in another set of circumstances, all circumstances are manifestations of Brahman He will not despise anything nor slight any one, cultivating an equal affection for all

Perceptions or realizations which come to a person in one state of being cannot be forgotten in other states They influence our conduct noticeably A man cannot but have more than one role A humorous friend told us the following story A certain teacher of mathematics went for an outing, "Where is the station ?" a passerby accosted him The teacher answered, "Geography is not my subject" This person evidently thought that a teacher of mathematics had no need whatsoever to know any geography It is true that all the things we perceive emotionally cannot be applied in practice But it is not possible to ignore these perceptions in our activity A person in whom emotion dominates must make distinctions in his actions He of course knows salt from sugar, which colour is red and which is not, which object is round and which square If it is necessary for reasons of personal and social hygiene not to touch a person, say a leper, he will observe the rule and refrain from doing so,

He will take upon himself the care of the afflicted person and incur risks but he will take precautions against contracting the disease He does this because his purpose is to cure the leper, not to become like him He may expose himself to risk deliberately but, in order to protect others, he will remove the leper to a safe distance from the town or village and if necessary dwell with him there The rule is here framed and obeyed in a spirit of love, out of intelligent and merciful consideration He does not forget that the leper is one aspect of God But in taking precautions he shows his judgment If, with an impure heart, he keeps the afflicted person at a distance, refuses to care for him, if he looks upon him with revulsion and horror, his vision of God as immanent in all things is destroyed at the very source Where then in his wisdom ? To experience the oneness of all life is an emotional realization and belongs, as the Sanatanists say, not to the state of activity but to the state of feeling But they are entirely wrong in assuming that these two states are distinct and separate They are different facets of one and the same experience Both the false and the true elements in the arguments used by the Sanatanists are thus exposed

The three states or conditions of the man of Steadfast Wisdom which we have described are knowledge (jnana), feeling (*bhava*) and activity (*kriya*) These are complementary to each other, not aggressive or oppressive That is to say, though they do not thrust themselves upon one another they exercise an influence which is mutual The different colours of the rainbow blend in an intermingled radiation though they appear to be separate and distinct This radiation forms a single entity which is known as a rainbow. The life of a man of wisdom is composed similarly of these three states or conditions of being We have seen what happens when a conflict arises between feeling and activity Conscience turns into invidious discrimination when feeling fails to influence action This is illustrated by the arguments advanced by the Sanatanists in favour of untouchability What they say is meaningless, for what they call conscience is, in their case, gross discrimination What judgment is shown in regarding a person who has been born a human being an untouchable by birth ? To do so is both stupid and ignorant Conscience and differentiation belong to entirely different categories By conscience, let us say, we mean discrimination between what is edible and what is inedible We have

already illustrated what we mean by conscience with the case of leper The leper must be isolated but at the same time given care, sympathy, love If love is the cause of his segregation it will be a conscientious act And if love is not the cause, it will be an act of invidious discrimination A second illustration is the case of a judge A judge has to take into consideration questions of right and wrong before giving his verdict If he does not his verdict has no value But the seal of the all-pervading Spirit must be set upon his work That means, in plain words, his judgment must be tempered with mercy The judgment will then be just Judgment unillumined by the spiritual intelligence will be merely vindictive.

Activity must be directed by feeling and it must also be regulated by knowledge To one who has knowledge both evil and good appear undesirable, he considers himself beyond both In activity a constant and intelligent distinction must be made between them These two states therefore appear to be contradictory But they are complementary for, although the state of knowledge is apparently so different from the state of activity, the acts of a man of wisdom are influenced by his knowledge His knowledge flashes out through them They are coloured by it All his activity is irradiated and glorified by his knowledge He is aware that both good and evil are false even while, in making judgments, he separates the one from the other Consequently he remains unattached and humble in all he does It is only in a state or condition of knowledge that a person can remain unaffected and uninvolved with the work he does Because a man of wisdom is enlightened he is not moved by pride when he distinguishes the bad from the good nor is he committed by his act Out of knowledge is born the *yoga* of disinterested labour

Thus, these three states intermingle, they are contiguous Together they form the irradiated life of a man of wisdom But what does it profit us to know the characteristics of the life of a man of wisdom ? This question may well be asked, Jnanadeva gives the answer "When we meditate upon the lives of the wise we also glimpse *mukti*" *Mukti* is not the monopoly of the man of wisdom *Mukti* belongs equally to all In contemplating the lives of those who have won *mukti* people find a way to recover their own It is, therefore, desireable that societies as a whole and people individually also sound come into contact with men of

wisdom and learn something about their philosophy Steadfastness is the natural and normal state of a man of wisdom but for others it is something we must exert ourselves to achieve The wise man sets an example for us to follow He points the way we must go Life must be oriented in that direction The lives of the wise are models which we must trace over and over again with our pencils The pivot of the traditional life of society as a whole is its fulfilment in liberty, *mukti*, freedom The lives of wise men show us that freedom can be won Such a man is for us a blameless and perfect ideal There are faults and imperfections in the fumbling efforts of the ordinary But the spirit, the *atman*, is everywhere the same and a knowledge of the three states or conditions of a man of Steadfast Wisdom is, therefore, of value both to individual *sadhakas* and to society in general

At the close of the seventeenth chapter of the *Gita* the subject of our discourse is summed up in the three words of the *mantra*, "*aum tat sat*" The *mantra* is not devoid of matter and it is certainly efficacious A *mantra* is more effective than a common ball for it changes the direction of life The life of a man, inspired by a *mantra*, alters, gradually coming to partake of the nature of the *mantra* This *mantra* has been given to us by the *Gita* in order that the qualities which distinguish the man of wisdom may appear in the lives of all It is the *Gita's* crown jewel And therefore, it is regarded as the seminal verse of the Vedas and the Upanisads

The first word is '*aum*' '*Aum*' means knowledge of God, a God that is immense, stupendous, all-pervading It is the true, comprehensive aspect of Brahma, an aspect with attributes '*Aum*' is also a letter and a word As a word it means, 'Yes !' '*Aum*' is the affirmative aspect of God

Tukaram describes the affirmative aspect of God in the following way Does He have form ? Yes Is He formless ? Yes Is He good ? Yes Is He not good ? Yes Does He have attributes ? Yes Is He small ? Is He large ? To all questions the answer is 'Yes' ! "*Idammayo adamayhh*"[45] is the phrase that says God is this certainly and also that '*Aum*' signifies the immensity, the stupendousness, the cosmic character of the form within which is comprised all that can be imagined and all that is beyond the imagination '*Aum*' is a word which, contemplated, is conducive to the experience of emotional realisation, *bhava*.

As a letter, '*aum*' is representative of all written characters It begins with the sound '*a*' and ends with the sound '*m*' Together these two sounds from the diphthong '*u*' The Sanskrit alphabet starts with '*a*' and ends with '*m*' The first letters are pronounced from the open throat and the last with the lips To pronounce '*m*' we press our lips together and take some assistance from the nose Therefore no letter follows '*m*' '*y*' '*r*' '*l*' and '*v*', which are placed after it, are, however, pronounced in the middle of the mouth, half-way between the throat and the lips '*u*' is also pronounced in the middle of the mouth '*v*' is therefore regarded as representative of all such letters '*u*' means 'both', the point at which the extremes meet All literature, all good and bad, all learning and all the arts are brought together in the word '*aum*' This interpretation may be fanciful but it is through the creation of a symbol for all expression that the immensity, the greatness, the comprehensiveness of the cosmic aspect of God can be indicated Therefore, we must take it as a subject of meditation

According to comparative phiolology, '*aum*' appears to be a verb root As a verb root it means to pervade all things, to be immanent That which is immanent in all living things in their natural condition is '*aum*' The Marathi verb root, '*aumb*', is derived from the pre-Vedic root '*aum*' and is ancient Our philologists have yet to discover where, into what pre-Vedic ages, Marathi will lead them The relationship between the word *aumb*' and the Sanskrit '*ve*' has been established but the nasal pronunciation is not thus accounted for The Gayatri of the Marathi language is '*ambi*' All the words which can be easily linked together in this metre are '*ambi*' Jnanadeva used the word, '*ambi*', in three and a half feet in accordance with the imaginary three syllables which compose it The name Uma contains this root and therefore means the goddess who is immanent in all things By adding the root '*vi*' to it the word '*vyomana*' means the supreme all-pervasive heavens, the *akasa* The Latin word '*omnis*', which means all, is a variant of '*aum*' It is found in English words like 'omnipresent' When the word is studied in this manner we find that the creation of a *mantra* out of the word '*aum*' to indicate the emotional comprehensive of the cosmos by a man of Steadfast Wisdom is most apprepriate

The second word, '*tat*' means 'that' 'That' is what is neither good nor bad It means what is not here, what is not close, i e.,

what is beyond imagination A sage attains a state of knowledge through meditation upon '*tat*' *You* are that, you yourself, we are told in *tat tvam asi*' You are not this world with all its litter and all its virtues, you are outside it, beyond the touch of all things You are '*tat*'

The third word is '*sat*' About this there is no doubt He is '*sat*' who forgoes evil and embraces the good '*Sat*' indicates eager interest in the good and the renunciation of the bad

Taken together '*aum*' indicates the comprehensive, all-pervasive Brahman, '*tat*' indicates the attributeless Brahman and '*sat*' indicates Brahman as unmitigated good Here, in these three words, we have the three states or conditions of a wise man They are not entirely separate We have already seen that the three together compose a single life, the life of a man of wisdom '*Sat*' predominates in the state of activity Activity-constitutes the obvious aspect of ourward life When the biographies of great men are written what they do, their activities, are described A man's works are the visible, tangible part of his life Therefore '*sat*' must be recognised as the chief word, the subject or, according to grammar, the noun '*Aum*' and '*tat*' must be thought of as modifying adjectives They have been added to '*sat*' in order to enhance its meaning Activity is taken as chief of the three states and equated with life '*Sat*', with its two qualifying adjectives, '*aum*' and '*tat*', therefore, indicates activity that is good and irradiated with the all-pervading spirit, that is to say, a life of this kind Comprehensive, beyond all involvement and pure is a life that is a full and true life Fullness in any context is to be judged in this sense

As an illustration let us examine the true character of *satyagraha* In this word, *satyagraha*, aversion to what is bad or untrue and interest in what is good, is plainly shown But in the effort to reject the bad and retain the good we should not forget to contemplate the cosmic aspect of God We must not forget for an instant that the person who stands in front of you is an aspect of you yourself You must set about correcting others as gently, with as much sympathy, as you pluck a thorn out of your own hand You must remember that it is you yourself who is being corrected though the act may be an outward one for somebody else You must not be angry or impatient You must understand that there is good where you see bad If you can enter into heart

of the person with whom you are dealing through the door of this goodness you will be able really to help correct the bad This is what '*aum*' means '*Aum*' tells you to set the seal of the realisation, that the one whom you consider bad, that the fault which you wish to remedy, is all a part of God, upon your work This is the foundation of *satayagraha* Do not think of yourself as the winner of a battle when, after much effort, your purpose has been accomplished. Do not take pride in what has been done as your handiwork All of it is only a mirage Remember that it is only a game You in your own nature and the person with whom you are dealing in his own nature are beyond all this Do not become involved in the game and lose your own knowledge A game is a game It must not be forgotten that we are not entangled in it In the word '*tat*' we are reminded of the need to retain our detachment

I have spoken of *satyagraha* by way of illustration It is the *sutra* of all human relationships It tells us how a son conducts himself in relation to his father, a father in relation to his son, a *guru* in relation to his disciple, a disciple in relation to his *guru* and so forth The feeling aroused by these three words taken together pervades in each of them separately also If only the part relating to the knowledge which is beyond good and evil is taken and the rest cast aside, the conscience which directs our activity, which guides our conduct, is also cast aside All activity will cease if only the transcendant aspect is taken

The features of the Steadfast Wisdom come to an end here Let us take one more look at Arjuna's chief question We shall then be able to follow the course of the Steadfast Wisdom Arjuna's first question is, "In what language does the man of Steadfast Wisdom speak ?" Language explains Therefore the Lord answers by giving, in a single verse, a full explanation of both constructive and destructive aspects of the Wisdom But Arjuna does not stop here He asks how a man of Steadfast Wisdom conducts himself, how he lives, how he moves about Is his speech sweet or harsh, does he live like a poor man or a man of moderate means, are his movements hurried or slow ? The Lord does not answer in this way Placing life as a whole before us he has answered three questions The whole of a man's life is comprised in the way he lives, the manner in which he speaks and his movements The Lord makes this assumption in his replies But

the answers are, in the literal sense, obscure Three verses have been given to the explanation of how a man of Steadfast Wisdom speaks Astute commentators have concluded from "*nabhinandati na dvesti*"[46] that such a man neither greets or congratulates anyone, nor does he decry or think ill of anyone This is superficial As to how a man of Wisdom lives, the answer has been given in ten verses and the assumption made that in asking how a man of Wisdom lives Arjuna wishes to know how he came to the present condition the methods he followed, the *sadhanas* he practised How such a man moves is described at the end "*Pumams carati nihsprhah*"[47] shows traces of it The use of the word '*carati*' in this connection must be noticed Taking all these into consideration Arjuna's three questions become (1) What is the full explanation of the negative and affirmative aspects of the Steadfast Wisdom of one who has come to rest in *samadhi* ? (2) What are the obvious, tangible and most evident signs of the Steadfast Wisdom, signs which are easily recognisable by all and which all can imitate ? (3) What is the part played by a man of Steadfast Wisdom in the life of the world ? If Arjuna's questions are given a meaning as extensive as this, a meaning correspondingly significant and deep will be found in the answers

The description of the characteristics of the Steadfast Wisdom is here brought to a conclusion Its effects are given in the last verse These effects are not, like the effects of many liturgical tomes, barren In the *Gita* effects which are logical, sure and masterfully conceived are given This is the *Gita's* way. The effects described here are of this kind

> esa brahmi-sthitih partha nainam prapya vimuhyati,
> sthitvasyam antakale 'pi brahmanirvanam rcchati [48]

"This is the divine state, O Partha, having attained whereto one is not bewildered, fixed in that state even at the end (the hour of death) one can attain to the bliss of God "

The world '*sthiti*', stability, is here contrasted with '*vrtti*', propensity or inclination '*Sthiti*' is part of the compound word, '*sthitaprajna*', the Steadfast Wisdom The difference between the two words will become clearer if we study them in their verbal forms The verb root in '*sthiti*' is '*stha*' '*Stha*' means to build, erect, set in a vertical, upright position It conveys a sense of

permanence, of constancy, of unchangeableness, of certainty, of durability of immutability The verb root of '*vriti*' is '*vrtti*' '*Vrt*' means to revolve, to turn in circles The word '*vartula*' is derived from the same root In '*vrtti*' there is a sense of restless changeability, instability, movement, unreliability, impermanence A man's inclinations, his propensities, are not lasting They change A period of wakefulness is followed by slumber and slumber by dreams In the waking state there is an interplay of many different propensities, anger, fascination, despair, elation The *yoga-sastra* classifies propensities into five categories The act of disossociating oneself from these five is called *yoga* Eight steps or stages are given The last is *samadhi, dhyana-smadhi* But *dhyana-samadhi* is not *yoga* It itself is a propensity It may be the last, the ultimate one, it is not in itself *yoga* *Yoga* means the absence of all propensities or, to be more exact, freedom from the influence of any propensity *Samadhi* means that the inclination or propensity to contemplate is cultivated, one reflects, speculates, meditates Man's inclinations are sporadic and changing in flux or absent In *samadhi* they are brought to rest and questioned Quietness implies stability This stability is, however, only temporary

The chief advantage of *samadhi* is that only one propensity, the propensity to meditate upon God, is retained and all other are dispensed with Meditation is beneficial because reflection on God, who is considered the source and support of all good things, is conducive to the cleansing of our conscience But *dhyana-samadhi* is not a permanent state It breaks up after a time Permanence is reached by going beyond it, beyond even the propensity to meditate upon God Beyond it lies, according to the *yoga-sastra, prajna* wisdom The consciousness, *ceta*, is pure, effulgent, and securely at rest in the *atman*, when *prajna*, wisdom, is attained This condition is known as *brahmisthiti*, repose in Brahman or the life eternal It is the natural state of a man of wisdom, a constant and imperturbable state Our propensity to meditate must be made the most of, utilised Out of it comes ascension Ascension implies movement but there is not much movement here This is the difference between *dhyana-samadhi* and *brahmisthiti* We made note of it once before, in the begining *Brahmisthiti* is eternal, everlasting Once *brahmistiti* is attained all movement ceases "*nainam prapya vimuhyati*" Illusion, once lost, does not regain its hold upon us Unlike other kinds of knowledge,

spiritual knowledge, *atmajnana*, does not have to be acquired over and over again

Between meditation and knowledge there is, of course, a difference and spiritual knowledge also differs from other kinds of knowledge Meditation is artificial It is the painstaking cultivation of an inclination Knowledge is not artificial in this sense It is not obtainable by cultivation This is the difference between *jnana* and *dhyana* The difference between *atmajnana*, spiritual knowledge, and all other kinds of knowledge is much greater I studied geography My examinations took place Not having any further need for the knowledge I forgot it When I lived at Benares I used to read the Railway Time Table of the United Provinces Now I no longer need the information I have forgotten it Knowledge of this kind is knowledge of externals and is a burden to the mind for that reason The mind carries the burden as long as necessary and then discards it The imposition of an enormous burden of irrelevant knowledge upon the mind is regarded as imparating an exemplary education To be highly educated means to cripple the mind by the infliction of a huge load of impedimenta The mind loses its strength and grows blunt and numb May God shield us from such learning ! *Atmajnana*, spiritual knowledge, is not like that Spiritual knowledge is not burdensome

Meditation, *dhayana*, is of an entirely different nature Figures of speech, verbal pictures, comparisons and examples are given in order to clarify the subject under consideration All these are forms of contemplation To attribute one thing to another is contemplation Its method is to select something representative and turn it into a symbol In other words, meditation is fabricated As I write the letters forming the word 'almirah' on a piece of paper I transfer to them the nature of the wooden almirah This is *dhayana*, meditation upon an almirah It does not add to knowledgedge It has no appropriate application outside literature A bottle of ghee cannot be kept in this word-almirah It is nothing more than the image of a thing, a symbol An article has different symbols and different images in different languages To confer a representative character on a symbol is a kind of artificiality Even though the knowledge of externals is not like *dhyana*, artificial, it imposes a burden upon the mind because it is extraneous to the *atman* This is such-and-such a tree It is of

such and-such a quality and such-and-such a nature It is true that this nature and this quality are not imposed upon the tree by me This is, in short, material knowledge, knowledge of facts, but external none the less This must not be forgotten *Atmajnana*, knowledge of the spirit, is not like this It is neither artificial not external Therefore, once it is won, it is won forever There is no possibility of its ever becoming spoiled or faded, for it is of the spirit and not of the intellect It is fused with the *atman*, merged with it It cannot be lost and it cannot be discarded This it is which is called "*nainam prapya vimuhaati*"

What is meant by the phrase "*sthivasyam antakale' pi*" ? Many think it means that, even at the time of passing, i e, the moment of death *brahmisthiti* must be retained It is generally acknowledged that man's end is hard It is not a simple matter to retain one's composure at that time If repose one has won with so much effort fails at the end all is lost If a train goes off the rails even at the very end of its journey it goes into the ditch All is ruined Therefore, this phrase reminds us, praticular care is necessary to see that this '*sthiti*', composure, is maintained through the end This is not the correct meaning The time of passing, death, is of course a most important moment It is also true that the *sadhaka* dare not relax his vigilance up to the fast This is why the *Gita*, in the Eighth Chapter, discusses at length the *sadhana* of our last hours And it tells us that in order to make this *sadhana* possible a life-long effort is required All this valid for a *sadhaka*, in the stage or condition of an aspirant, not to one who has attained to repose in God, *brahmisthiti* *Brahmisthiti* is not something that is experienced momentarily and later lost A constant effort is not required to maintain and retain it *Brahmisthiti* is not an inclination or propensity at all It is a permanent and continuous and stable state of being It lasts People look upon the moment of death as something dreadful *Brahmisthiti* is not interrupted at that hour This is the meaning of *antakale 'pi'*

The meaning of the word '*sthiti*' was discussed in considering the phrase '*nainam prapya vimuhyati*' And the line, '*sthivasyam antakale' pi*', clearifies the meaning further

Brahmisthiti is present always, at the time of death and at all other times Unlike other knowledge, it is unmistakable and is never wrong A certain person was ill. He has passed several

examinations in English But, as a result of his illness, he forgot all he had learned entirely This happened because that knowledge had been imposed upon his mind from outside His mind, debilitated by illness, relieved itself by throwing off the burden That was right With *atmajnana*, spiritual knowledge, the case is different One may not win it in a hundred thousand lifetimes but once won, it never dwindles No question of 'if' or 'then' arises in connection with it such as, 'if' one's spiritual knowledge is retained at the time of passing 'then' *brahmisthiti* will be won 'If' and 'then' have no place in this context The purpose of this verse is to make this plain

Samkaracarya understood this very well In order to avoid the trouble caused by 'if' and 'then' he used a different kind of phraseology altogether He interpreted the passage given above as meaning that, if a man attains to *brahmisthiti* at the last moment, even at the time of his death, he will achieve *nirvana* What Samkaracarya says is true, but there does not seem to be any need for this interpretation here The beauty of the words, '*sthitvasvam antakale 'pi*', is lost These words imply that *brahmisthiti* is a condition that is so beautiful, so immutable, so strong, that even circumstances as dreadful as those associated with a man's death cannot defeat it, nor is it disturbed by them. The meaning given to the verse by Samkaracarya is not erroneous, but it is a little beside the point And the interpretation which sees in it nothing more than an admonition to take care to retain *brahmisthiti* is, to say the least, very superficial

The final effects are given at the end in the phrase, '*brahma-nirvanam rcchati* Like the phrase, '*sthita-parjna*, the steadfast wisdom, the phrase, '*brahma-nirvana*' is an expression peculiar to the *Gita* A merging into Brahman, assimilation into Him, is indicated Brahman does not live in a particular place to which one must go in order to merge with Him The barriers set between Brahman and myself are the walls of flesh behind which I dwell To merge with Brahman these walls must be removed I am Brahman already The compound word or phrase, '*brahma-nirvana*'. implies that human life finds fulfilment and justification in merging with Brahman, in being assimilated into Him, in the removal of fleshly partitions All our undertakings, our entire lives, our individual families, our social service, our acquisition of knowledge, contemplation and so forth, have this supreme purpose

in view The *Gita*, in coining this word, presents this idea to us

Brahman means vast, immense, stupendous Our purpose is to leave the narrow confines of the body and become like Brahman One form of life is larger than another A third is larger still There are distinctions between creatures But creatures, by comparison with Brahman, are most insignificant They are finite, confined within limits The subject of man's speculation, the object of all his reflection, is to discover the means of transcending his limitations, set himself free and take on infinite proportions All his efforts are directed towards the progressive enlargement of his sphere The achievement of the greatest possible dimensions is what is called *brahma-nirvana* In such a condition the walls of flesh drop away The body, looked at in way, will be seen to be the instrument of the *sadhaka*, his tool For some time the body is useful, a help to our *sadhana* Later, as man becomes more and more infinite in his nature, he leaves the body behind him and advances without it The body belongs to the primary stage in the practice of this all-pervasiveness In later stages the body is a hindrance Knowledge, *jnana* contemplation, *dhyana* and work, *karma-yoga*, are all begun in the body and find it useful at the start But later, as these develop and the infinite is envisioned more and more clearly, all things are seen to be contained in and permeated by the *atman* After the realisation the body ceases to be of any use

People are drawn to a person in this condition or state of being This appeal, the sense of human brotherhood, seems to them to be a great thing To the wise man himself it is a small matter When a man of wisdom dies it seems to us a great and irreparable loss, for we are deprived of a great uniting force. The day of his death is regarded as a holy day To me it does not seem holy Saintly commentators have imposed the word '*punya*' on us in connection with it and we accept it silently It is a word with profound association Such a day is really a day of *punya*, holy It is on the day of his death that a wise man really becomes a uniting force Any appeal he may have before then is small by comparison What though he be wise ! His body is meagre How many can he unite through it ? But a uniting force, acting through the body, is visible, evident to all The fascination of physical presence makes us feel that a great loss is sustained when a wise man dies The trust is, however, that the

body is an obstacle in the service of all creatures It does not help to hold the world together in a bond of brotherhood

A long as walls of flesh enclose us we cannot identify ourselves with all creation or feel with it The body prevents us from entering into the hearts of all, the universal heart The body is useful to us as long as our separate and individual hearts are instruments of our *sadhana*, tools we use in our effort to understand the hearts of others Through my own hunger and thirst I come to understand the hunger and thirst of others Individual existence gives me the opportunity of understanding the sorrows and pleasures of others through my own experience As long as my own personal heart is a measuring rod by the help of which I can measure the suffering and happiness of others is is useful Once I have beheld the vision of the universal heart, the heart of all life, of the All-prevading Spirit, a particular body and a particular heart, a particular set of sense organs and a particular mind, particular emotions, all particular things become hindrances They are thenceforward nominal The ultimate object of our contemplation is a merging with infinity, assimilation into Brahman and oneness with the heart of all life, the total elimination of all sense of separate existence and the tearing away of all designations This is *brahma-nirvana*

Buddhists take the word '*nirvana*' only, omitting the '*brahmo*' They prefer the negative language of prohibition The word '*nirvana*' implies that a man should shatter the vessel of his identity and give up all feeling of 'my' and 'mine' When a person dies an earthen pot is broken in his name It is a custom sanctioned by the Hindu *sastras* The feeling out of which the custom has arisen is the feeling that, since from now on this person must be spoken of as dead, let him really and truly die Let the earthen vessel of his hopes and aspirations be broken Let his individual existence, his 'I'ness come to an end This is also the reason his body is cremated When his father dies a person buries him and plants a mango tree over the grave The tree bears fruit He then says the mangoes have grown out of his father's grave A man buries his mother in a field and plants a lemon tree These lemons are nourished by his mother's bones The custom of cremation was adopted in order to set us free from such morbid ideas Cremation is symbolic of a lofty concept Why should we want one who has died to cling to us in one form or another ?

Am I a touchstone that his or her life will turn to gold if he or she cling to me ? The practice of burial, of building altars to the dead or setting up memorial tublets or planting trees and bushes on graves, ars all efforts to retain in some form or other something of the one who has passed away Cremation is, therefore, preferable Memorial tablets are set up nevertheless The body has been reduced to ashes Enough ! All is over Buddhists prefer negative phraseology because prohibitive injunctions can be derived from it Let man's illusions, all his attachments, perish with the body. Let him become nothing, *sunya* Therefore, the Buddhists retained only the word '*nirvana*'

Notes and References

1 Translated from the original Hindi by Lila Roy
2 See *Gandhi Marg*, October 1958
3 *Ibid*, January 1959, pp 11-17
4 *Ibid*, January and April 1959
5 *Ibid*, July and October 1959 This is the sixth instalment of the discourse on the second Chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*
6 *Ibid*, January 1959, p 17
7 When a man dwells in his mind on the objects of sense, attachment to them is produced From attachment springs desire and from desire comes anger (Dr Radhakrishnan's translation)
8 See *Gandhi Marg*, April 1960
9 *Chamdogya Upanisad*, 7 26 2
10 *Bhagavad-Gita*, 18,73
11 *Ibid*, 2,7
12 *Ibid*, 3 40
13 See *Gandhi Marg*, July 1960
14 *Bhagavad-Gita*, 2 64
15 *Ram-Charit Manas*, 2 2
16 *Bhagavad-Gita*, 2 65
17 *Ibid*
18 See *Gandhi Marg*, October 1960
19 *Gita*, 2 63 ("One is done for as soon as one's intelligence is destroyed")
20 *Ibid*, 2 66
21 *Ibid*, 5 12
22 See *Gandhi Marg*, January 1961
23 *Isopanisad*, 6
24 *Bhagavad-Gita*, 13 17
25 *Ibid*, 18 61
26 The previous *verse* (2 66) was dealt with in the tenth instalment of this discourse—see *Gandhi Marg*, January 1961,

27 *Bhagavad-Gita*, 2 67
28 *Ibıd* , 2 68
29 *Ibid* , 2 58
30 *Bhagavad-Gıta*, 2 69
31 *Ibıd* , 2 20
32 *Ibid* , 2,47
33 *Bhagavad-Gita*, 2 70
34 *ye ye kama durlabha*, etc ın *Kathopanisad*, 1 24
35 *Bhagavad-Gita*, 2 55
36 *Ibıd* , 2 71
37 *Bhagavad-Gita*, 2 71
38 *Ibid* , 10 9
39 *Bhagavad-Gita*, 18 51
40 *Ibıd* , 9 19
41 *Ibıd* , 13 13
42 *Ibid* , 9 15
43 *Ibid* , 1 14
44 *Ibid* , 5 19
45 *Brharayaka Upanısad*, 4 4 5
46 *Bhagavad-Gıta*, 2 57
47 *Ibid* , 2 71
48 *Bhagavad-Gita*, 2 72

3

BHOODAN AND GRAMDAN

VINOBA BHAVE

Through Bhoodan-Yajna, I intent to solve the land problem, which is the main problem for the whole of Asia If we try to solve this problem through violence, the feeling of hatred among our own people would be on the increase In this scientific age, its consequences would not be beneficial If, on the contrary, we are able to solve this big problem through non-violence, love and peace, then co-operation among the people and strength of the whole community will grow and people will be happy Some people ask me, "Why is it that you go on walking for nothing ? Why do you exert yourself so much for the Bhoodan work ? Why don't you get the work done through legislation ? That would be easy and everything would be achieved "

But how can everything be achieved through legislation ? Suppose as act were to be passed confisating land from the present owners If an agriculturist then were to refuse to part with his land, he would be imprisoned That is all that law can do The sanction behind any law is the coercive power of the state which implies the power of the army. That is why what we expect to happen after preparing people's minds for it, would be voluntary action If there is no co-operation of the people and if a reform is thrust on them through legislation, it would not only fail to achieve its objective, hut there would be widespread violence and hatred in society

There is a place for law along-side of non-violent effort If a particular reform is voluntarily adopted by a number of individuals

and if that voluntary action prepares the public mind for the change, then whatever little work is left to be done could be achieved through the progress of law Thus even in non-violence there is a place for legislation But that place comes last The effort that is at present being made for the solution of the land problem through non-violence is itself a great power in this age of science

Yet I consider it a small achievement that the problem of land is being solved through Bhoodan and Gramdan What is of greater importance is that the level of thinking gets elevated as a result of this movement People of an entire village would constitute themselves into a family Air, water and land—which all are just gifts of God to man—would be shared by all The villagers would take to co-operative endeavour A villager will begin to think, 'I shatl work not for myself but for the society I shall care not only for myself but for the whole village community " When we adopt such an attitude, the entire moral plane is changed

That is the reason why I experience so much vigour and enthusiasm in conducting this movement I am now rather advanced in age and yet I do not feel any fatigue The reason is that I have within me an extraordinary feeling of bliss It is not possible for me to describe it in words I am enjoying this nectar of everlasting bliss and I desire to share it a little with all and make them also taste it

We have to mould a new man

Old order has already changed yielding place to new Now even the national borders cannot last long

Once a friend from Australia had come to see me He asked "What is the significance of the Bhoodan Movement to the world ?" I replied, "This itself that there is ample land in Australia, whole there is not much in Japan, so what you have to do is to invite the Janpanese to come and settle down in Australia " The poor fellow was speechless for a while on hearing this Later he said, "Yes, we have enough land to go round, but we desire that our civilization should be kept intact That is why it people from Europe whose civilization is very nearly like our wish to come to Australia, we would be willing to accept them "

I told him "This indeed is the poison, to destory which the Bhoodan Yajna is being conducted. The civilization of Japan is

different from that of Australia Europe or India Similarly the culture of the Hindus is different, that of the Mussalmans is different—it is just to bury all such wicked ideas that Bhoodan Yajna exists We have no small ideals before us in the Bhoodan Movement. We profess to change human life completely and create a new world

Judging from the course and method of the Bhoodan-Gramdan Movement that is going to begin ? in India, people of the world have begun to feel that there is some hidden power in this type of work which will ultimately open the way for solving the various problems between nations That is why during the course of my *paduyatra*, many people from countries in Europe, America and Asia continue to come to meet me They join me in my march, write books and articles after returning to the countries and nurse a hope that from this movement some true way out would emerge for the establishment of world peace

One friend asked me "This Gramdan of yours sounds very fine, yet perhaps it is being thrust on the people In other words, if you declare that land belongs to the community, would there be freedom under your scheme for men to live according to their own inclinations ?'

I am pleased when such questions are asked It is my earnest desire that if there be any element of evil in an otherwise good idea, that element should be removed forthwith I myself am not prepared to swallow uncritically any good idea, however, noble or great I always like to examine it thoroughly A good many people are pleased when they hear of Gramdan and say that now Baba speaks of abolishing the ownership of land Now land will belong to all All the available land in a village would now be pooled together and big schemes of co-operative farming would be launched on an experimental basis

Then questions are asked of me whether I really intend to do some such thing I say in reply "*You* can have big schemes of co-operative farming if you want to or you may also not have them if you are so inclined In Gramdan, I believe in "alsoism" and not in only-ism ' In other words, this also would be permissible, and that also would be permissible It would be decided according as the villagers think it best Gramdan is as it were a voluntary declaration of *Gram swarajya*, the commencement of real village self-government

Therefore, that system alone will prevail which the villagers after mutual discussions and understanding approve of No system or arrangement would be thrust upon them from outside If each of them prefers separate individual cultivation of the land he can do so, and if two, four or even more persons want to come together or even if the whole village wants to have collective farming they are welcome to follow their inclination All will, however, work with complete unanimity If the opinion seems to be divided, both the experiments would be undertaken But the ownership of the land will vest in the village as a whole and consequently there would be real village self-government in each village

If we use bad means for a good end, then problems would continue to crop up in India But If we use non-violent means for solving our problems, there would be no problems at all in the world This is the reason why I want to solve the land problem peacefully I am asking people to donate land in Bhoodan I am not begging alms , When a demand is being made by me in my capacity as a representative of the *Daridra Narayan*—the God in the form of the poor—it is not alms I am asking for, I am thereby imparting to the people instruction in the rudiments of social obligation In other words it is *deeksha*—initiation—and not *bhiksha*—alms I have, therefore, come to this conclusion that the noble work which God wanted to get done through the Buddha has now been entrusted to a weakling like me

DEFENCE MEASURE

I have all along been saying that if the village people declare their village a *gramdan* of their own free will, it could be considered as *the beat defence measure* If a world war were to break out, this Five-Year Plan would all collapse to the ground For, the plan is mostly dependent on the exports and imports of the country If a war starts, all imports and exports would come to a standstill, the prices of foodgrains would shoot up and the even tenor of national life would be greatly disturbed What will save the country at such a juncture ? It is my considered view that the co-operative, non-violent structure of the gramdans would prove to be the only real defence of the nation

State power and self-government are two different things Power can be seized through violence But self-government is impossible to be achieved without non-violence That is why thinkers do not aspire for political power But they earnestly want people to unite and work together for the achievement of self-government I have no desire to rule others, and 'Let us endeavour to attain to self-government' are their prohibitory and commendatory political slogans respectively

The process of joining together alienated hearts has been a continuous one in India I started the *Bhoodan and Gramdan* movements for this very purpose that separated hearts of the people should once more be united There are many reasons for estrangement of hearts People's hearts are estranged as a result of religious feuds, linguistic conflicts and communal riots as well In times of economic distress also hearts which were once united get alienated for ever In order to remove all these various causes, I want that today's villages should be transformed into *gram swarajya* units I have come amongst you people with the message of *gram swarajya* alone *Gram swarajya* is a device to cement hearts together

When we declare our resolve to establish village self-government, that is *gram swarajya* in a village and make ownership of land communal, then every one gets a small share id land We provide village industries to those who do not get enough land prepare seemes for producing in the village itself all the primary necessaries of life

If every village prospers, the country prospers and attains glory If every limb were to function smoothly, the whole body would function properly If even one of these were to give less work, the body would not be in a position to function efficiently Similarly, when all the villages would conduct their affairs properly and there would be real self-government in each village, then alone there would be the content of real self-government in the country The people must, therefore, run the government in every village There would be as many departments for policy-making and as many different sections of work in a village as there are in a country There is a health department in a state government, similarly, there would be a health department in a village administration There are ministries for industry, agriculture, education, justice and law in any central government,

so would there be all these in a village government

Nothing whatsoever should be done which would harm the village industries In this connection our principle is that those industries, the raw material for which is produced in the villages and the finished product of which happens to be an item of daily use by the villagers, should be kept reserved for the village sector Why can not a few industries be reserved for the villagers just as we keep reserved forests ?

The defence potential of a country must reside in every place This protective power I have named as *Shanti Sena*

There is a great difference between the armed forces and the *Shanti Sena* Though there may be some similarity between the two armies so far as drill, discipline, etc , are concerned, there is a difference in their main characteristic The armed forces work more efficiently where they have no acquaintance For, there the only question is that of shooting people This work is best done where there is no previous aquaintance

On the contrary, a non-violent army, that is a *Shanti Sena*, is able to work much better in a familar area among familiar people A person who has earnestly and for a long time served a particular area is most suited to become the *Shanti-sainik* of that area If any non-entity from India takes into his head and goes of France to do *Shanti Sena* work, he would full miserably Local servants of the people alone would be in a position to function as *Shanti Sainik* in any area

Now-a-days I have begun to feel that there could be no stronger inspiration to work than the proposal to organise a *Shanti Sena* I think that at present all should give up their various assignments and with enthusiasm busy themselves with this work The nation needs today the service of the *Shanti Sena* most I do not make the claim that the *Shanti-Sena* will be in a position to replace the army immediately But today many small disturbances and riots take place here and there in the country If there is a *Shanti Sena* available for work on such occasions it can to a large extent put a stop to such evils All this wickedness manifests itself when the standared of humanity degenerates, the armedforces can do nothing to check the degeneration On such occasions of inhuman behaviour on the part of the people, the *Shanti Sena* alone prove useful

All agree that if the strength of the *Shanti Sena* increases, the

life sustaining power of the nation would also increase correspondingly People belonging to all political parties declare that this work is good but that they would not be able to do it These disputes and conflicts which take place periodically are sometimes caused by political parties also or the political parties are at least somehow associatated with them That is why these party people say that may be in a position to function as *Shanti Sainiks* on some occasions all right, but that they are incapable of accepting the responsibility of this work independently They, however, want this kind of work to grow

This work happens to be of such a nature that it has the blessings of one and all It helps us to seek entry into each and every house in the country If as a result of the work of the *Shanti-sena*, we are able to relieve the Government of the country from anxiety on the score of internal disorders, it will strengthen the power of the Government One can go from village to village and develop this strength This will lead to the lessening of the worries of the Government and to the further growth of national solidarity.

To report to cruelty for freeing oneself from the blame of cowardly behaviour is like flying from frying pan to fire Cruelty and cowardice are just two sides of the same coin Bravery is as far removed from cowardice as from cruelty A brave person is fearless and therefore, indeed, non-cruel

FEARLESSNESS NECESSARY

The people have these days shifted a good many of their responsibilities on to the shoulders of the government The most that they would sometimes do is to offer a little co-operation As funds are required to raise a big army, people pay taxes and thus think that now they, the citizens of the country, are safe But so long as they themselves are not fearless, they should not consider themselves as well protected, they are on the contrary, weak and defenceless For, they rely entirely on the army The confidence that they can defend themselves is lacking in them All their faith is in the army They have given themselves to sensual enjoyment They daily attend the cinema shows, read erotic literature, are addicted to evil habits, keep very late hours at night, do not get up at daybreak, are afraid of going out in

the rain, are unable to work in the hot sun All the people become soft and easy-going

Under such conditions if they happen to hear that a war has broken out and our army has had to withdraw, what happens ? The entire people feel helpless and weak They begin to think of their own uncertain future It would appear as if the morale of the whole country has collapsed The army is unable to protect a cowardly people That is why every citizen of the country—every boy, girl, man and woman—must learn to be fearless We must not lead a lotus-eater's life We must not go on multiplying the means of enjoyment If the nation follows such a programme of action and practises sternly the penance of fearlessness, the nation would become strong It implies that there must be qualitative development of the people

There is some difference between the methodology of a war of violence and a war of non-violence What do we do in a war of violence ? When we find that our weapons are powerless before the weapons of our enemy, we invent new weapons deadlier than before and use them The method of conducting a non-violent struggle more vigorously differs from that of the violent method In a violent war, it is necessary to increase the deadlines of the weapons, in a non-violent struggle it is necessary to enhance the purity of the means

Gandhiji gave us a word—"Non-Violence' Surely Non-Violence cannot mean inaction Non-Violence is a great power And power like any deity has to be propitiated What kind of propitiation is implied here when I use the phrase propitiation of the deity of Non-Violence ? All of us who are inhabitants of India must live as brothers Our mutual relations and behaviour must be based on love No one is to be considered low no one high We should suppress none, we should fear none This constitutes the worship of the diety of Non-Violence

I have not an iota of faith in the power of weapons A weapon is weak It has no inherent strength of its own It is only when we lend our strength to it that it becomes powerful Instead of lending our strength to the weapon when then should be not confer it upon ourselves ? That is why Gandhiji draw our attention to this power of the Self

4

THE NEHRU LEGACY—DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

VINOBA BHAVE

With the passing away of Jawaharlal Nehru the world has lost a great humanist and India an unparalleled leader. When Gandhiji left us, the country was passing through a critical period. The situation today is no less critical, but the boundless love that Nehru had for India and the Indian people would, I am sure, help us more now than when he was physically in our midst.

What is our duty in this hour of sorrow? We must be courageous. We must not grieve. We must work for unity, love and peace amongst ourselves in this country. We must also try and fulfil the special mission that India has in world affairs, though our captain is no more with us.

It is a very rare thing for a man to be engrossed in politics, in political battles, and yet to remain absolutely free from hatred and bitterness. Nehru was such a man. His mind was completely free from hatred. He has set before the world a fine example of how one can fight for one's principles and yet harbour no hatred towards one's adversary. This is the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

To cultivate friendship with all peoples and to work for peace in the world, independence for all subject peoples and co-operation among all nations—that was, in my view, the essence of Nehru's life work. This message of universal friendship is his priceless bequest. It is our duty to do our best to make it a reality.

I think of Asoka the Great when I ponder over the life and work of Nehru By introducing the Asokan lion capital as our National Emblem, he in fact was asking us to be virile and brave and yet to cooperate with others This the image of non-violence he has put before us He wished us to be strong, brave and free from hatred

Nehru's special legacy to us is the way of Democratic Socialism He has all along been thinking on these lines, though he could not naturally make the country accept the objective of Democratic Socialism all at once The resolution passed at the Awadi session of the Indian National Congress was, as you will remember, rather vague and the explanations and interpretations that followed helped only to water down the concept still further But at the Bhuvaneshwar session of the Congress his call foi socialism was clear and unambiguous He has delivered the message and his duty is over It is now the duty of all of us to implement that message

I believe that by accepting Democratic Socialism as our goal, we have given a positive content to the concept of non-alignment There are some nations that claim themselves to be Socialist but refuse to accept the cancept of democracy, there are others which claim to be democratic but fear the concept of socialism Our goal of democratic socialism, combining as it does both democracy and socialism is opposed to neither of the two great ideologies It is a positive concept The democratic element in it ensures the freedom of the individual and in my view, also includes non-violence Generally speaking, politicians who accept democracy do not necessarily include non-violence in it But I associate nonviolence with democracy At any rate, Democratic Socialism has been further defined as 'decentralized democratic socialism by peaceful means,' which seems to me almost synonymous with Sarvodaya Let us not, however, quarrel over a word

Nehru was not only the leader of the nation but also of the masses of its people This combination of both types of leadership in one man is very rare indeed Furthermore, he was a national statesman as well as a citizen of the world—a universal man He believed that there could and should be no conflict between the good of one nation and that of the whole world, since in fact both are one and identical It was this faith that guided him in life We should pursue our work with the same faith

Nehru had a mind as large as this universe He had pride of no region, bias for no particular language and attachment to no one religion To whatever part of the world he went, he mingled with the people as one of them, feeling the exhilaration of brother meeting brother In the language of the Upanishads, the people were his God, looking at them and talking with them he felt enraptured Death can never take away a man who loved his people so much Verily I say, Nehru has mingled with the people of India and will live them for ever

SINO-INDIAN CONFLICT

> "People are all aware of the present conflict between India and China I do not think that this will last long—If it should, the world could could not survive I do not believe that it is likely to be prolonged, because current of thought in the world today is towards the realisation that our problems cannot be solved merely by an appeal to arms"

We have just been witnesses of a very significant happening in the Sino-Indian conflict A victorious army has withdrawn, declared a cease-fire, proposed negotiation and invited its opponents to the conference table The question is raised, whether they can be trusted Well, let us put their sincerity to the test, let us not be caught unawares, let us go on with our preparations to make the country strong, let us not diminish in any degree our present alertness, all that is to the good But consider, has a victorious army ever before, in the history of the world, voluntarily laid down its arms and retreated ? Has anyone ever heard of a victorious army which, when the way was clear for advance, did not advance but withdraw ? What does all this mean ? It means that today a "world conscience" is taking shape In former times the world would never even have heard of any conflict in the Himalayas in fact, there must have many major conflicts of which no one has ever heard In these days, even a minor incident draws on itself the attention of the whole world

The present conflict, however, is not a minor incident It concerns two great and ancient nations, whose destinies have been linked together by the genius of the Buddha, and therefore, it has made an impact on world opinion In these times, it is not

enough to be victorious on the battlefield, if one does not also win over the heart of mankind, the heart of the world The world-conscience is now a reality, and it is in order to win over this world opinion that China has withdrawn From this point of view the victories on the NEFA border had no value, on the contrary they only served to awaken and unite India and procure her the sympathy of the world and also to cause some difference of opinion between Russia and China In spite of India's non-alignment the Western allies came to her aid, and Communist opinion throughout the world was divided China was forced to consider whether she wished to win a little war at the price of losing world good will She realised that there was no value in acquiring a new province, if she could not gain a victory on that greater battlefield in the hearts of all mankind—the field of ideas and ideals

China has realised this, you and all of us must realise it also. We must not say that we are not willing to talk with her, if our opponents give us the smallest opening for talks we should seize the opportunity and meet them half-way It is those who have no self-confidence who lay down conditions and insist on the letter rather than the spirit These matters cannot be resolved on the basis of conditions We must be bold enough to enter upon negotiations as soon as there is the slightest opportunity That is the demand of our times

The Lesson of Cuba

What did we see in Cuba? It seemed as though a world conflict might break out and the world be destroyed by atomic warfare Russia possesses plenty of atom bombs, but at this time she dropped a bomb-shell which was more powerful than all of them She announced that she would pack up and go home, and invited her opponent to a contest in the arena of peace Now it takes as much courage to leap into the arena of peace as to leap into the battefield of war The timid and the cowardly can have no place either on the field of battle or in the councils of peace—they are doomed to defeat alike in both It is the brave who go forward boldly to play their part in peace negotiations

A new Chapter is being written in the history of India and of the world India is awake, and some people ask us mockingly, what is the use of non-violence in times like these? It is a

strange question Communal quarrels have disappeared, along with the disputes between employers and employed, and the occasional police firings, people are determined that these things shall not happen Does this cannot violence—or non-violence ? When the whole unity of the nation is thus founded upon non-violence, it is amazing that we should talk as if non-violence were useless just because we have had to send a small army to the border If we stop to think at all, we shall understand how extremely important non-violence is now We need unity of spirit within our villages and between members of various political parties, we need a union of hearts beetween religious communities, and a resolve that there shall be no more Hindu-Muslism riots in India China has taught us what our country really needs The demand of the times is for friendliness, the demand of the times is for non-violence

Violence No Solution

A conference of non-aligned countries was held in Colombo China had withdrawn her troops because she wished to impress the conference with her readiness to negotiate She makes war and talks of peace, and this makes people think that she is a rogue She is not a rogue Mankind has come to the conclusion that violence has no solution to offer for the problems of today, but it is not yet found the means of solving them by non-violence, the search for techniques of non-violence is in progress If we had had them ready to hand, there would have been no aggression and no need for us to use an army it would have been Shanti-Sainiks who would have gone there In short, men feel the need for non-violence and have lost faith in violence Otherwise China could have occupied Tezpur and possibly the whole ot Assam But they could not pin their faith to the armed forces with they employed, because other kinds of forces we now at work in the world, to which they feel that an appeal must be made

As I said, the techniques of non-violence have yet to be tried out What does a man do when he is faced with a deep river and can see no way forward on dryland ? Does he jump straight in ? No, he tries to find a shallow place to ford it, then he goes back to see if he cannot push his way through the thorn bushes The world is in just such a state today, hesitating between two ways A country which is prepared to wage war, but is not prepared to "wage peace", is bound to lose ground Russia has demonstrated

in Cuba her ability to "wage peace", and that can only be done by those who have faith in themselves The real question is not whether China can be trusted, it is whether we can trust our own inner strength, so that we shall go forward with courage either into battle or into the councils of peace It is not enough that our weapons are strong, our words must be strong also

No Abandonment of Non-alignment

India is at present a non aligned country Some people, even some prominent people, are trying to push as into the American camp They will forgive me for staying that I see no wisdom in this, it would only result in Russia joining the other camp Two blocs would be formed, and China and India would become the centre of a conflagration Today the Americans themselves are saying that India's policy is eorrect, and that they are ready to help India without requiring her to join their bloc What is it that urges us to preserve our non-alignment ? It is surely the voice of *Ahimsa*, which calls us to realise that nothing can come of an armed contest except universal disaster Is that what we Want ?

India has to be fully prepared By being fully prepared we usually mean only that we should be provided with fire arms That is far from sufficient If you want rifles, have them But suppose every man has a gun, and someone goes mad and starts shooting with it ? The more weapons you have, the greater is your need of self-control, otherwise the guns will rule the country I have seen this with my own eyes on a small scale, so I can imagine what might happen on a larger scale The dacoits of the Chambal ravines are well armed, for 50 years the police have been trying to bring them under control, and they too have been supplied with arms One armed force was confronted by another, but the problem was not solved The villagers also has to be trained to defend themselves, and Home Guards were given guns, so there are now three armed forces Has all this brought about peace ? When I visited the area, 18 or 20 dacoits brought their guns to me—there was a price of 4 or 5 thousand rupees on each of their heads If I had claimed the reward I might have lived in comfort for the rest of my life ! The poor fellows are still in jail and the battle between police and dacoits is still going on—because no one understands how to bring the power of love into action If those dacoits had been shown a little mercy and forgiveness,

they might have been completely changed—but love and forgiveness are not understood I read just now in the newspaper that some dacoits have been killed, but new dacoits will spring up from every drop of their blood This is what is going on in the Chambal revines, and it needs serious thought

Suppose you and I were to quarrel, but possess no weapons We express our anger by abusing one another, or at most by punching one another Suppose, however, we have sticks, we may be no more angry than we were before, but the damage done is greater When we have guns, the result is murder So if you supply the public with guns, must you teach them self control or not? Is non-violence needed or not ?

We pay little attention to the world today I have had a gift of 150 dollars from America for Bhoodan work, from some students who had saved it by missing a meal five times It is no small matter that American students should wish to help Bhoodan, and that they should make not merely a gift, but a sacrifice, for it They realise that problems should be solved by non-violence That is what the world wants, it is hungry for peace and non-violence

Preparedness—A State of Mind

There must be no slackness, we must not let our young people grow up soft Our *rishis* knew very well that "the weak cannot possess their own souls " I do not complain that the country is trying to strengthen itself "Those who do wrong, who are negligent, shall not attain wisdom " We must all be prepared But preparedness is not a matter of guns, it is a state of mind When that quality of mind is attained, it can control the gun, and use it only when the proper time arrives It will also make every effort to see that the time for firing never comes, if in spite of its efforts the time does come, it will fire with reluctance and regret.

This control of the sword is in the tradition of our forefathers If even in those days they felt the need of non-violence, of moderation, of limiting the use of the sword, how much greater is our need today ! When two countries meet to discuss their differences, one word spoken in anger from one side may well bring the whole discussion to an end and armed conflict may begin There is grave danger in one wrongly-spoken word—control of speech is the demand of this age of science It seems to me that in India we are

very apt to express all kinds of ideas without considering how they may confuse people's minds Democracy demands, for its successful working, not only fully freedom of speech but also the fullest exercise of deliberation and self-control

I have just been in Pakistan, giving the message of Bhoodan I talked about the need for people of all religions to live together in peace They welcomed what I said, but they began asking about the incidents in Malda, Aligarh, Jabalpur, etc What could I reply? It is no answer to ask what happened in Rajshahi or Noakhali We have to understand our own mistakes, otherwise we shall prove unworthy of our country We are not a small country These great rivers, this Bhagirathi, this Brahmaputra, water not one but many provinces Their mighty currents continually call on us to open our hearts and unite, on the social, political and economic fronts

Unity of Hearts

This is the purpose of the Bhoodan message It is directed to a unity of hearts Let each village be united, let sectarian quarrels be completely abolished, let the young men undertake the protection of the village, let no village dispute be referred to outside courts Let everyone unite in increasing food production and organising village industries. All village land should vest in the village council (though it may be cultivated in individual lots) so that it cannot be sold to outsiders You are organising Home Guards What are you going to guard if your land is sold away ? The village must keep its land, must keep sufficient grain for the needs of all its people If you do that, you will be prepared to protect your village We have no true village in India because we have no concern, no plan, no standards of conduct, no bonds of affection, for the village as a whole We have only a lot of separate houses So long as this is the case, people will care only for their own families First build up your village family community and then make ready to protect it This is what will strengthen the villages and lay the foundation of India's progress.

5

SARVODAYA AND COMMUNISM

VINOBA BHAVE

I

APPEAL TO COMMUNISTS

Today I will answer some questions put by Communist friends who, I am glad to know, are working here I want them to work on right lines I want to assure them that I am as much anxious for the emancipation of India's down-trodden as they are Like them I am also eager for the salvation of the masses and my endeavour goes on in that direction Hence I seek their co-operation There is some difference of opinion between them and me But difference of opinion is idevitable in such a vast sub-continent as India But as far as the service of the poor is concerned I hold them in as much love as the Communists do and that is why I long for their co-operation If they feel that this is a good way to tackle the problem of poverty I would expect them to offer me their helping hand

Their question is instead of taking land-donations from the poor, why should they not be taken from the feudal aristocrats, Rajas, Navabs, Kulaks or rich peasants only ?

My answer is I do not want to avoid any one of them I will take lands from all of them But my asking land from all does not mean I ask equal lands from all From the average peasants I want one-sixth To big peasants and zamindars my request is to keep a little for themselves and donate the rest to me And

from those who are very poor the little they would give I would accept as blessings or *prasad* As Lord Krishna was delighted at the few paddy grains offered by Kuchela so also Bharat-mata is delighted when these poor folk give even a small amount since that is an expression of love I would go on demanding till all the landless in the country are provided with land Frequently I am asked the reason of accepting gifts of the poor I am always glad to reply to it since it helps in the propagation of the ideal. There are four distinct reasons why I accept land from the poor

(1) Today the most unhappy in the society are the landless Compared to them, poor peasants are in a happier state After all when we call one man happy and the other unhappy we do so by contrast Should one look towards those below, one would find himself happy, while should *he* look towards those above he would find himself unhappy Therefore, everybody must make some sacrifice for the sake of those who are the most distressed in society even as all water of the globe flows towards the sea standing at the lowest level Both the mountain-water and the plains-water run towards the sea Should we ask the plains-water. "Why dost thou, of low level, flow towards the sea ?" it would reply, "Compared to the sea I am on a higher level and, therefore, I must run towards the sea " Likewise, as it is the duty of the well-to-do to give something for the landless, so also is the duty of the poor kisan, because from the point of view of the landless, he his somewhat better off Hence it is enjoined upon all to do something or other for the landless This is what I want to inculcate Otherwise we would find that one who has got a small portion of land has no duty to fulfil But everybody has a duty to fulfil Suppose I have not enough pieces of bread with me, but if any hungry man comes to my door while eating, it is then my duty to give him a part of what I have I want the society to imbibe this spirit

(2) My ultimate object is to impart the lesson that land belongs to God alone Today like the well-to-do who regards himself the master of the land he owns, the poor man also regards himself the master of his little bit Both recognise themselves as the owners or masters of land I want to relieve both of them of this feeling of ownership As we must give water to the thirsty, so also we must give land to the tiller who demands it because I want to bring it home to the people that all land belongs to God. Today

both the rich and the poor suffer from the ownership-complex And verily, a Babaji residing in a forest has as much attachment to the loin-cloth he owns as the rich man has to his heap of clothes I, therefore, want that everybody should get rid of this attachment

(3) When we ask the rich to part with their land we must command some influence over them But how to command it? Have we any power? Do we keep a pistol? We neither keep one nor trust in its power We believe that a pistol never solves any issue, nay, it spoils it I, therefore, seek to create moral strength Should thousands of poor men offer their gifts it would give rise to a moral power that would affect the rich This is actually happening Formerly, the rich used to avoid or bypass me, but you see how much land they gave me in Hazaribagh Why so? Because when the poor have been donating land to me for the last two years it created a sense of shame in the rich And shame can move the shameless The Shastras say "*Hriya deyam*" (*Should be given with modesty*)

This is a way to develop moral power I trust that the rich people would take to my work more and more When the Raja who donated one lakh acres saw me I told him that he had done good to donate but that alone would not serve the purpose and that he should perform the duty of making others of his group part with more lands He accepted my view and I hope that the rich people would slowly take up my work because a normal power is being built up on account of the offerings of the poor

II

THE NON-VIOLENT ARMY

I have frequently said that we are raising our own army We have to wipe out the differences of high and low and raise such an army as may enable us to take up a fight on its strength Our soldiers would be those who have made donations or done some sacrifice or showed sympathy in our work Ours is not an army of violence in which those with 32″ wide chest are recruited For an entry into our army one should have a chest of sacrifice In case the rich do not open their hearts in future I would go one step further ahead I have never imposed upon me the restriction that we would not move a step further than what we are doing today,

I do not believe in such restrictions Ours should be a force of rigour of love Oh ! how much sacrifice does the other undergo for the child ! She prepares food for the child But when she finds that her son is going the bad way say is pained What does she do then ? Nothing but Satyagraha She takes to fasting and gently brings the son round Satyagraha consists in bringing others round by self suffering and without inflicting any pain on others

What is Satyagraha ?

When I mention the word 'Satyagraha' I do not intend to threaten you I know Satyagraha can be abused and it is being done so frequency these days But I earnestly hold that a conduct of truth must be insistently followed so that others' heart may melt Satyagraha is the preparation to offer any sacrifice for this conduct And I maintain that if there is one true Satyagrahi in the world he will produce his influence on the whole world and the heart of the latter will irresistibly melt But he must bear love towards the entire globe

On the other hand, we find today fasts undertaken for every little work even for province-formation This is all wrong since we do see that it produces such reactions as are in complete variance with the original object Only that fast is true which results in awakening the feeling of love in all hearts. That fast is false which results in producing such uptoward reactions as envy and disputes Fast is to be undertaken only when we bear love towards the one against whom we fast and who should feel ashamed of his conduct After the fast he must have a feeling that he was wrong and wicked Should the person against whom I fast or offer Satyagraha be one not so moved heart, I must be regarded as an untrue or superficial Satyagrahi I am a true Satyagrahi only when the other party is made to feel that I have true love for him in my heart

Therefore, do not be afraid when I talk of Satyagraha I say this for clarity of thought and my feeling is that all that I have been doing for the past two years is a sort of Satyagraha I have also studied Satyagraha and tried to follow it to some extent Satyagraha never means doing something against someone on a particular occasion Merely opposing somebody is not Satyagraha So all that I have been doing—going round on foot, explaining the idea to the people from village to village and asking for land—

is Satyagraha itself

It is wrong to assume that only a pistol can prove violent A fast can be as much violent I believe that my army would prove to be so mighty and strong that it would not require to fight, nor to shoot any arrow It has been said that the opponent gets vanquished even at the mere sound of the bugle So also would the bugle of our army be effective When lakhs of poor men give donations a battle would not be necessry In Hazaribagh I got four and a half lakh acres But I said that the same did not satisfy me I, therefore, asked the workers there to execute 60,000 *dan patras* which they agreed to Why am I doing this ? When God had to lift the Goverdhan he asked all to apply their 'lathi' (or stick) below it So I accept gifts from the poor because this is the work to create popular sanction and strength

If the communist brothers would think over the matter deeply they would find that there is no better way to create the popular power

Question II Why don't you ask all leaders, ministers and members of Parliament, etc , who own land to donate ?

Answer Today people forget their own duty, yet remember that of others But I try to bring home to all their own duty You well know that they are going round asking land for me Do you think people are so ignorant as not to ask them, before giving their donations, what they have themselves given ? Therefore, rest assured that when they have taken to my work they would have undoubtedly donated some land But I am not aware whether they have given enough land or not Once a man lets me in I am not going to stay on in his courtyard only, rather I would go straight to the kitchen with a request for food to meet my hunger So when somebody, opens the door for me it means I get a place in his household I feel that the leaders of Bihar having taken to this work would have donated at least one-sixth of their own land

METHOD OF DISTRIBUTION

Question III Should not land be distributed only through the committees consisting of peasants and labourers ?

Answer It directly means that the poor should get land But there is no reason to raised any misgivings about the distributing system I have formed such rules and regulations for

it as to leave no room for doubts or partiality Land would go positively to the landless Its going to someone, else would imply a brerch of trust as there are rules of land distribution What is quite likely is that in lieu of Ram, land may go to Krishna. But both of them would be landless in any case Possibly, of the two one who does get land my have some gievance in his heart But I imagine that some way would be found out for him also in such a big movement as this In case the landowner are given land that means a betrayal of confidence I am working on right lines and that through agricultural labour committees alone Indeed ours would be a committee but without any power The only reward its members would get would be that of walking on foot They would have to go from village and study the lands donated My method is such as to make the landless select from among themselves those who should get land In case there is sufficient land all of them would get it If not, we would beg for more land in the open meeting and then it would suffice for all. My experience is that on such occasions love springs up in people's heart and they do donate Our entire work would be carried out in public meetings, and nothing in private We would ask the landless to select some from amongst themselves None other would have the right to make this section, Since there is truth in the heart of the poor, they themselves speak out as to who is poorer among them and hence more deserving of land I am not talking in the air I say it from my own experience that one landless withdrawn his name in favour of another landless Should they fail to do so we have a loss then and there This method assures that the land would go only to the landless As all this is done openly and the friend putting this question would also be there The members of the Communist Party of India should be present there Suppose I am the distributor, I would ask you, "Have all the landless assembled here ? If not, why did you not bring them here ? I would hold you guilty of negligence " It only means my work would not be complete as long as my Communist brothers do not feel satisfied

Ceiling or Flooring ?

Question IV . Should there not be a ceiling of land as pointed out by the Kumarappa Committee ?

Answer The Committee recommends that the amount of ceiling should be three times the land to be duly owned by a

cultivator My friend who has posed this question wants to convey that we should move the Government for this I sympathise with his observation But I want to tell my innocent brother that this much alone would not suffice I want to explain to my good friends of the Communist Party of India that fixation of ceiling does not help us seriously I saw in Ranchi that many have distributed land among their relatives as soon as the idea of ceiling went in the air ! If we say that 25 acres are the limit, it means that a family can own 200 acres When all this came to my notice I concluded that the ceiling would not prove beneficial to the landless at any rate I, therefore, want to impress upon my Communist friends that they are on the wrong track If you want to do anything for the poor begin wite flooring Frst resolve that every cultivator must have at least five acres of land

III

MOBILISE THE GOODNESS OF ALL

Replying to questions raised by some communists in a letter addressed to him, Vinobaji deprecated the tendency of Communists to resort to violence even if the objective was within reach of achievement without struggle

He said Communists would rather accept a stone achieved through struggle than a piece of bread secured through pursuasion and change of heart They did not realising upon struggle and struggle alone they (Communists) divided society into two distinct classes, the rich and the poor There method was to secure the good will and sympathy of both sides

Acharya Vinoba pointed out how by converting his opponents to his views he definitely gained their sympathy and support On the other hand, the communist way of treating good and bad men alike, deprived them of svmpathy and support of good men on the opposite side, who by their presence minimized the evil forces and gained the support of their camp Thus, the Communists were losers as a matter of fact They hopelessly betrayed lack of diplomacy

He warned them that it was useless to expect elimination of good men belonging to other camps He asserted that there was no reason to disbelieve the sincerity of rajas and big zamindars, as the Communists did, for they (the rajas and big zamindars)

would dig their own grave if they thought of deceiving him He knew how sincerely they were moving from place to place for the Bhoodan Yajna

In case, however, they deceived him, he said they would be exposed If he could win them over – and he had no doubt that he could—it would undoubtedly be a great gain In any case the poor could only be gainers and not losers He invited Communists to accompany him and see for themselves the tremendous awakening among the landless, who thronged in their thousands to listen to his message They knew their claim to land was established and that they were sure to secure land

Communists themselves first misunderstood the Bhoodan movement as antagonistic to their movement but were now slowly appreaciating his efforts and had stopped opposing them What was that if not a change of heart ? He was hopeful of receiving greater support from them

Referring to their objection to the acceptance of donations from poor and small land-holders, Acharya Vinoba said he wanted to eliminate the sense of ownership which existed equally amongst the big and small He wanted all to realize that they had to surrender their rights to society Communists did not realize that by accepting donations from small land-holders he was mobilizing a great force—a non-violent army—which would not lag behind in respondings to his call of satyagraha if and when necessary

He wanted Communists to study the progress of his movement and see how it worked While some people believed in the necessity of the State for all times, he was one with Marx so far as the idea of a stateless society was concerned

He also wanted the State to wither away, It was a different matter that Communists believed in the necessity of a strong centralized State prior to its withering away He wanted the State to wither away through decentralization of power

He said "I am not a member of any party My name is not even on the register of the Sarvodaya Samaj I would gladly join the Communist Party if it convinced me of its ideology "

IV

MENTAL TRANSFORMATION

It is about two and a half years since I began to be in personal contact with Communists In Telengana, where I started this

Yajna, I met some of them in jails and others in the distant villages where they were working I had discussions with them and all along I have been telling them that I consider them as friends Even though their ideological approach to the problems of our country and also of the world, is entirely different from mine, I have been assuring them that I consider them not as enemies but as friends

It is a fact that they desire the uplift of the poor and there are many among them who are up to any sacrifice for the same I am also anxious to serve the poor and so it is that which makes me claim their friendship My mind is always open to conviction and if in case they can convince me of the soundness and correctness of their approach and ideology, I am prepared to join hands with them I wish they may also keep their mind open as I do, so that I may try to convince them of the correctness of my stand and what I aim at

They were telling, in the very beginning of this Bhoodan Yajna, that it was a wrong step and it was directed against them Subsequently when they found that the ideal behind it began to spread, the people got awakened and began to offer Dana-patras and this awakening in India began to produce its own effect on other countries of the world, some among them came forwerd to show their sympathy A few of them received me with welcome addresses and offered even gifts of lands

Their great leader Sri Gopalan has now clearly started that the Communists consider this movement good even though it would not produce the result that I expect He states that legislation alone can solve the land problem This statement of Sri Gopalan is, of course, a result of mental transformation to some extent It is no proper for anyone to claim that he cannot be mentally transformed If anyone does so it shows that he is lifeless, not alert or sensible I don't think that the Communists are devoid of life

Capitalists and Communists

The Communists have stated again For certain special reasons we have no faith in this Bhoodan movement as it would, instead of solving, make the land problem more complicated " Of course everyone is entitled to express his free opinion The capitalists also are not in favour of this movement The capitalists

think that this movement will lead to the disintegration of land into uneconomic units resulting in loss to the nation Here as also on many other points, both of them join hands Both desire and believe in centralised production They differ only in the methods of distribution The capitalists want distribution to be done according to the individual's capacity to buy, whereas Communists say it should be equal to all But I say that production should be decentralised Both of them are against this. The Communists have now begun to say "There are some weaknesses in your movement So we can't have any faith in it" It looks they should place faith in this movement if the so-called weakness is not there

The Communists say "You consider that mental transformation of the rich can be done, but organising the poor into unions is violence" I have never said that the poor should not be organised and there should not be awakening in them In fact, I claim that such an awakening as has happened among the poor during these two years of this Bhoodan movement, had not happened at any time before Thousands of landless people come to hear us They have understood that, on their behalf, I am claiming their right I am not begging but I am claiming their share as a matter of right as a representative of the poor in our country

I have been always stating that land is the gift of God just like sun, air and water and nobody can claim ownership to it The very objective of Bhoodan Yajna is to make the people relize this ideal People listen to me and when they realize the truth of the ideal, they offer me lands as gift so that it may be distributed to the landless peasants

The Technique of Bhoodan

Let my Communist friends understand that I do want to awaken and uplift the poor I tell the poor, "Don't break your head" I desire to strengthen them and lift them higher and higher I search and find out among the rich as to who are the real enemies of the poor in them But Communists consider everyone among the rich as an enemy of the poor This attitude make the good as well as the bad among the rich join together with the result that the wicked among them gain more strength

Even if the good among them is only 10 per cent their

sympathy, if alienated, will naturally go to add to the strength of the 90 per cent of the wicked amongst them Therefore, through non-violent means I discriminate all the good persons in them and withdraw them to the side of the poor They who do not know how to exercise discretion, know neither political nor moral science

In Mahabharata there is the story of 'serpent sacrifice' All the serpents were killed The one by name Thakshaka alone escaped death, for he hid himself behind Lord Indra When the priest came to know that Thakshaka had the added strength of Indra he repeated the manthra "Let both Indra and Thakshaka be killed" But Indra could not be killed because he is immortal, so Thakshaka also couldn't be killed and he became immortal It couldn't be that everyone in any group or party will be bad and wicked Among the rich though there are many who are bad, there will be at least some who are good So to consider all alike is not proper The Communists do not understand what strategy we use to discriminate the good from the bad

The Communists want every one to be destroyed I have withdrawn some Rajas from the rich and they are now working actively for Bhoodan The wrestler has to wrestle with his adversary in front I am now in a wrestle with the Rajas and the big Zamindars If I am defeated, of course the Communists' stand will be justified and the can say that the rich, cent per cent of them, are wicked and so Vinoba was defeated But if I happen to be the victor, the poor are the people to be benefited In either case the Communists will not lose anything

The Communists are saying that the big landlords give me only hilly and useless lands But I may tell them that I am doing Hanuman's work I go to the feet of Lord Rama lifting the whole mountain Let Him take whatever medical herbs he desires I have told the big landlords in Bihar that I will take 32 lakhs of acres of good land from them Yet if they give me waste lands also I will certainly take, for it forms part of the mother country and is dear to me The donor of course gives up his ownership over it and that is what I aim at

The Rajas have given me good lands too If they deceive me what do I lose? They will get exposed by themselves The poor will only be benefited if their enemies disclose themselves Who else is there in the world to save the Rajas other than those who

believe in Sarvodaya ideals ?

Communists ask me why I receive lands from the poor They do not know how to fight My objective is to do away with the sense of ownership The sense of ownership is not only in the minds of the rich, but it is in the middle class people as well as in the poor I want everyone to be rid of that feeling Even the Zamindars will have to be provided lands in distribution

It could be only a Rama-Ravana battle if all the good people are pitched on one side and all the bad on the opposite side In such a fight there cannot be any peace or settlement But if there are good people on either side there cannot be a full and pitched up fight I desire to have a full fight

I want to have all the hoarders and misers on one side and all the kind and generous people on the other side If at all any conflict comes let it be between the misers and the generous I too am ambitious to win and it is for that I am preparing I am sure to be victorious in my fight but the Communists cannot I don't desire any conflict and fight But if anyone throws a challenge to fight I will fight till he is completely routed

Three Kinds of Pressure

Pressure is of three kinds They are (1) pressure by the threat of violence, (2) pressure by the sanction of law, and (3) moral pressure by the strength of good public opinion The last I welcome I have never said that I will not hesitate to accept it in my effort to bring about the mental transformation in men The Communists friends now state that through legislation alone we could solve the land problem May I ask them from where the force in law emanates ? Is it from the people or from the military? You did not even bring about any change in the ideological outlook of the people How then can the sanction of law come in and have its force in society ?

Marx has said The power of the State will be captured by the poor people to begin with, but in the end "the State will wither away" This means that there will be no State authority towards the end and the governance of the country will go on without the interference or function of any central power If the Communists respect this maxim enunciated by Marx, then they have to believe in the goodness in man and trust the people This was a practical proposition to Marx and he believed that it could be practised

in the immediate future and not after a lapse of a million years If the goodness in man is not relied upon, the State will never wither away at any time and its authority will continue for ever Our Communist friends now say that the State should be made very strong now and all power should be concentrated at the centre This they call as the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat', They proclaim that the State will wither away in the end in spite of this dictatorship in the present days How ?

The Sarvodaya ideologists also believe in the total disappearance of the State authority in the end To achieve it they believe that weakening of the central power should begin even from today Decentralization of the power of the State should begin even now Without it, State will never disappear at any time I ask the Communists on what fundamental they base their proposition that the State will wither away in the end Is it not on the truth that there is goodness in the hearts of men ?

V

MEET COMMUNISM WITH BHOODAN

To these youths, partly excited and partly disillusioned, I want to convey that the class against which they are labouring so hard well never survive But their shouting against it will give it a lease of life If the rich or the 'haves' of India thrive, the attitude of the Communists would be held responsible for it If they change their attitude and give the opportunity to the rich and the poor here to give vent to their generous nature, the rich class would disappear, If my Communist friends cast off their label and work as 'man' they will, like me, get entry into every house of the country When I was in Telengana I told them so and appealed to them to come out in the open Also I then told the official army that Communists were no beasts that could be hunted out by a gun They are not '*sher*' or lion but '*Chintashoor*' (brave of thought), having the power of an ideology and the support of a book and that they could not be wiped out by violence The only way to tackle them is to tackle the evil or misery which irritates them We must effectively attack poverty and want People try to reply the Communist in vain I know that not words but action is the only answer to them The ideology of the Communits must be

faced by a positive ideology and sound action If the rich people of Bengal take up the 'Bhoodan Yajna' movement and donate one-sixth of their property the suspicion of the Communists will vanish But if these people would avoid Bhoodan and evade us I want to know where they can find a safe corner ! If the rich are afraid of the Communists, of Government, of robbers and thieves and also of me, where and how shall they live ? I, therefore, humbly appeal to the rich not to be afraid of me and liberally participate in the Bhoodan Yajna They would then find that they need not be afraid of the Government, nor of robbers and thieves and the Communists too would wax eloquent at the uniquence of our Indian culture

One meets several cases of rich men having Communist sons I am not surprised at it For, I have often said that it is the Capitalists who are the parents of Communists This is a quarrel between the father and the son which would be mutually settled I am, therefore, afraid of neither the Capitalists nor the Communists In U P Communists gave me both 'manapatra' (Welcome Address) and 'danpatra' (Land gift) They had observed in their address that though they had no faith in my method yet they would change their opinion if it succeeded I hope that the rich community would grasp the truth that here is a chance for it to earn the leadership of the society If they take to the service of the poor they can do a lot 'Bhoodan Yajna' is like a bridge to unite all I want the people of Bankura to stand up and unitedly fulfil the Bhoodan quota of one lakh 'danpatras' and one lakh acres of land. As char ty begins at home, let each of you give your share first and then carry this message from door to door

VI

COMMUNIST'S INTERVIEW

Why not Organise the Landless ?

Replying to the query of the Communists whether it would not be advisable to organise the landless instead of walking from village to village and house to house for collecting land gifts, Vinobaji explained

> "Our meaning are attended by both the landless and the landed We present our demand for land as a right and in the

capacity of a representative of the landless As a result, a tide of awakening is evident in the landless of this country The sales of land have received a set-back because people are confident that they will receive land through Bhoodan In Orissa the Gram-dan movement has presented a unique change Not one or two but all the land-holders in seven hundred villages have surrendered their right of ownership in favour of the society Could this happen without the awakening of the landless ? The deer takes to its heels when we try to hunt the tiger Similarly, the land-holders easily understand our point of view when we speak to them as representatives of the landless "

Social Transformation

The Communist friends pointed out how they did not believe in the collective transformation of the society as a whole through the process of Boodan though they admitted its efficacy in bringing about a change in the selected few

Appreciating their point of view Vinobaji said that his was the mission to create a universal awakening and without an exception That was exactly why he demanded and accepted donations from the poor also He was, as a matter of fact, trying to form a society which would voluntarily renounce its ownership, at least in part if not in full It will be an army which will have its moral effect on the society as a whole That the process has its desired effect has been amply manifested in Bihar, where she price of land has come down below mark This is not all The Government of Bihar wanted to fix a ceiling of 30 acres, but their proposed legislation provided facility to retain 300 acres of land in the name of good management The Bhoodan movement brought such a pressure on the Government that the suggestion had to be given up totally The movement thus has its moral effect also Our approach, therefore, is four-fold First, we try to create the awakening among the people Secondly, we try to bring about a change of heart in the land-holders Thirdly, we try to bring pressure on the Government and last but not least, we want to raise a non-violent army to be ready to make necessary sacrifices, in case all the above three-fold attempts do not bear the desired fruit "

"The success of our mission," continued Vinobaji, "depends on our efficiency and on the intensity of our work There is,

however, no room for any misunderstanding about our goal" Vinobaji made it clear that he did not consider it either a sign of merit or of strength to be either a land less or a poor "Are there not men among the landless and the poor" he asked, "who are addicted to drink, and void of character, cleanliness and what not ? Our mission is, therefore, to convey our ideas to them and inspire them to give to the society whatever they possess—land, wealth, energy, talent, everything The various gifts mentioned through these processes of self-purification will qualify even the poorest of the countrymen, to enrol himself, in the non-violent army, which we want to form"

Change of Faith Among Communists

Regarding their lack of faith in the theory of change of heart, Vinobaji pertinently asked if they themselves did not stand as an illustration of such a change For, during his first Telengana tour the Communists not only had no faith in this movement but had actively opposed it in variovs ways Today this position has changed, and they are now convinced at least of the goodwill of the man as well as his mission, and hence the sympathy that was so much evinced by them in the mission Vinobaji gave another illustration also In the beginning, even the constructive workers did not believe that the landowners would donate lands to anyone else, except to Vinobaji. They were, therefore, feeling shy of asking land-donations "But don't you see now that even the humblest of the workers does not return empty handed ? Would you not call this, a change in their minds ?" he asked The Congress in the beginning tried to find faith with the movement and went to the length to calling it as contrary to the Constitution of India because it advocated elimination of personal ownership But today the same Congress declared that the responsibility of the movement rested not on Vinoba alone but on all of them Did not Pandit Nehru declare that the Government could not free itself of its responsibility because of this movement ? All this change had come about in four years' time Let us compare it to the prolonged struggle of twenty-five years in China and you will at once realise the influence and the potentiality that the movement has commanded within such a short period The problem of land is not a small problem The great awakening that is becoming evident among the masses today does demand serious thinking,"

be added

Referring to the different political parties in the country, Vinobaji pointed out that, as a matter of fact, there existed not many but only two parties—the generous and the miserly And the latter had penetrated in all the parties It would, indeed, be a great achievement if the Communist party got rid of the niggardly element in them He did not want to reserve to himself what he commonly observed these days that if in a family the father was a Congressman, one of his sons was a Communist, while the other, a Socialists, so that the family was always in an advantageous position whichever part came to power Like a section of the Hindus who, in spite of their intense indulgence, did not hesitate to claim themselves as Hindus, the stingly element in the political parties claimed loyalty to their organisations If the parties are but purged of this element, their organisation will, indeed, be strong even if the membership is counted in hundreds instead of in thousands "Bogus members whether they are Communists or Congressmen do not and cannot, indeed, add to the strength of their respective parties," he asserted

VII

SARVODAYA AND MARXISM

"In the workers' meeting at Neyyatinkara, Vinobaji's second camp in Kerala, the representative of the *Kerala Janata* a Daily, put a few questions to Vinobaji who answered them at length The following is the gist "

Question Is there a possibility of a compromise between Sarvodaya and Marxism ?

Vinobaji Marxism is not an *ism* that can be translated into practice ignoring the nature of surrounding conditions and environments It is a method of application It has to undergo changes according to altered conditions and circumstances of each place

In Russia, the revolution was carried or not exactly on the same line as enunciated by marx In China, we saw the adoption of another form different from that used by Russia In the altered conditions and circumstances of each place and in response to the

demand of the times, Marxism has to change its methods We all know that Marxism was born in Europe at a time when capitalism was in its worst phase and it was this *ism* that was employed to combat it This itself shows its application is always subject to adjustments and changes

But Sarvodaya is an ideal of life It is ever ready and anxious to receive and absorb everything that is good in other ideologies and *isms* Sarvodaya is a free ideology embracing and comprehending the entire life It is not simply born to combat or compete with any particular ideology It moves onward from day to day It welcomes and assimilates all that is good Hence Marxism also can find a place in its fold So there is no permanent conflict between the two ideologies—Marxism and Sarvodaya

I hope that Marxim will accept a different attitude and adapt itself to the peculiar conditions of Indian culture and tradition When I was in Orissa some Communists friends came to obtain my signature to the Appeal for Peace Movement I told them that every dana-patra (gift-deed) for Bhoodan is a vote for world peace and a mere signature on the appeal would be of no effect at all After a lapse of one and a half years, one of those friends—perhaps he might have realised the real significance of my words—came to Tamilnad and walked with me in the Bhoodan Yatra

Marxism will be of use to India only if it adapts itself to the conditions of this country It can thrive only if it works keeping the welfare of the people in view If Marxism is an ideal that refuses to change, the doctrine would be of no human value I hope and believe that it would never be a fetish of the ignorant but will be that of the wise who would be always alert to changing conditions of times

As the Ganges becomes wider and wider and moves on and finally merges in the ocean, I hope Marxism will merge into Sarvodaya one day Perhaps the Communist friends may disagree and believe the other way I may tell them that I have as much right to believe in my own way as they in their own

The philosophic basis of Sarvodaya is consistent with and congenial to the cultural tradition and condition of the people in India Very few adjustments are alone required On the other hand, Marxism demands very great adjustments and that is why I say that Marxism will be absorbed in Sarvodaya The future will prove the truth of this The Communist friends welcome me.

I love them The Communist Cabinet here in charge of the Government has proclaimed that it will carry on the administration within the framework of the Constitution This itself is a clear proof of the changing attitude of the believers in Marxism to new condition

Question 2 In the light of your past experience and the results in the Bhoodan movement have you ever felt the need for changes in the movement ?

Vinobaji Bhoodan movement has progressed in the right direction Today it has reached a stage proclaiming that all land should belong to society only It began with the demand of small bits of land Then the claim was raised to 1/6th share of the landlords to make every tiller the owner of land This again developed into the demand of the whole village which is now a Gramdan movement Now the emphasis is that the bond of love that exists between members of families should extend to all in village community which is the common family holding the land for the benefit of all The movement as it progresses has naturally blossomed into a flower In reality it is not a change that has taken place to suit the external conditions It is an internal process in organic growth for the advancement of all

Question 3. Do you think that in the light of special conditions in Kerala any change in Bhoodan programme is required ?

Vinobaji I am just studying the conditions in Kerala and I can reply only after my study is complete

Question 4 A political party which is against the Bhoodan Movement is now in power and is engaged in the task of enacting land legislation according to its ideals How will it affect the Bhoodan movement ?

Vinobaji I have no party bias I am a non-party man I always try to understand man as man Each one differs from the other I ignore religious differences and attach no value to party differences I never believe that man will never change his views and ideas I do not think or believe that the Communists are against Bhoodan Those who have no faith in it today, I believe, may change tomorrow and I feel that none can escape it Perhaps the Communist friends think that the land problem cannot be fully solved through Bhoodan alone

It has to be seen whether the legislative measures that the

Communists are going to bring in are for or against Bhoodan My view is dependent on the nature of their land legislation Legislation may be of violent or non-violent nature and it may tilt towards either If a legislative measure even if it has the backing of the electorate, is not of non-violent nature, that legislation itself will be violence

6

GRAMDAN : WHY AND HOW ?

VINOBA BHAVE

SARVODAYA THROUGH GRAMDAN

Whatever be our religion, language, caste or creed, we are the sons of the same Father We are all related to one another But today we have forgotten that one Father—the Lord of all creations That is why we couldn't get united and become happy One society have become partitioned into three separate divisions Some are called the high class, some the middle-class and those at the bottom, the low class The high class people have nothing but contempt for their brothers of the low class Rarely do they show any affection to these poor brothers with whom they have to be in contact in their every day life They think and say "these people are fools, they have no brain in them to work intelligently, they are idle and often do steal, they have no respect for truth, they have to be supervised, or else they won't work propeily, if they are given money they won't use it discereetly but will squander and waste it" They are thus simply considered as beasts of burden

People of the low-class think that the high class people are cruel, wicked and deceitful They work in their fields and shops and do often praise them in their face though they don't like them and have nothing but hatred towards them in their hearts For help they go to the high-class people and if it is not received they abuse them If help is given they say "Yes, today they have given something but tomorrow they will take it back hundredfold from

us Who knows what sufferings at their bands are in store for us ?'

Thus though neither can live without the other the one above condemns the one below and the one down hates the one above

These three divisions in society should give up their wrong attitudes towards each other They should forget their differences and become one identifying with each other Then only will society become strong They should co-operate with willing hearts and thus serve as the strong and equal props of the tripod of society Bhoodan is aiming to achieve this We appeal to those who have enough physical strength to offer their willing labour to the good of the whole society We appeal to rich and the wealthy to voluntarily other Sampattidan for the common benefit of all We appeal to the owners of voluntarily surrender their right of ownership over land and accept the ideal that land can be owned by society alone

Our people, whether they belong to the high, middle or low-class, have one good trait in them and that is faith and devotion to Dharma They put implicit faith in the words of good and saintly persons Once they understand truth and the real Dharma, they begin at once to practice it We have to go from village to village, from door to door and make the people understand the basic ideal behind Bhoodan This is real Satyagraha and we should go on doing it with love in our hearts and faith in truth and in the ideal It should be done till all understand us Our people are such that once they get the light and realize their Dharma, they will be quick to act and none can draw them away in any other direction Thus our society is now getting reformed day by day

The days of violence and loot are fast disappearing Changed values of life are being recognised now in our society People are offering me land What strength is there in me but that of truth and love ? More than 200 villages have been offered to me so far in Koraput district as gramadan by the villagers

Wherever full villages are received for Bhoodan, there will be no more of the rich man's contempt for the poor, the poor man's hatred for the rich or the jealousy or rivalry among the middle class All will become equals There will be none high, none low, and none in between the two Of course there will be some differences but those variations will be only such as are found among the five fingers of the hand. All the fingers co-operate and

jointly do a lakh and odd things People should co-operate and jointly work like the five fingers, they should live as the five Pandavas lived, they should mix and mingle like the five elements of nature When this happens our society will become free of scorn, hatred and rivalry and there will be love, full respect and co-operation between individuals Then every one will grow and all will become equal Such is th Sarvodaya Order of Society Such of those villages that are offered as full *dan* will witness this real picture of Sarvodaya In them all the villagers will say that all land in the village belongs to the village in common and all the wealth and intelligence of the people therein will be utilized for the benefit of all in the village Each will feel that the lives for others, and he will not think of himself but will think of others And every one in the village will look after every other and the common good of the village will be the one concern of each and every one therein

GRAMDAN OR VILLAGISATION OF LAND—WHY AND HOW ?

I

Though I am incarnated in one body my relationship with others continues It is necessary to be aware of this broader and all-inclusive relationship before one can hope to realise the *atman* Gramdan is not a big thing by itself But it is the first lesson in understanding that there can be no happiness and peace in isolation The mind creates false sense of separateness The division of "I" and "You", "thine" and "mine" is an illusion of the mind This has to be conquered Life is one whole and there is no division If some one hates me I must accept that I have not attained real love in my own heart Because what is without is within and *vice versa* Gramdan will fulfil itself when it helps us to experience this oneness of all life

2 Bhoodan is not a movement but an ascension The more you climb up tne larger is the vision that opens out before you In the beginning most people were sceptical and wondered if I could get any response But people have gradually opened their hearts which has emboldened me and I am now asking for Taluk-dan and District-dan

3 Possession of land is as much a sin as theft That is why land should be owned by the village But accumulation of wealth is a greater sin

4 It is necessary to remove this ignorance and fallacy Knowledge and love can help people understand that the sense of possession should go Life can be transformed through thought Gramdan has to be brought about by persuasion and love Love lends power to thought, provided we ourselves have love in us,

5 I have no doubt that the people will increasingly see the truth behind gramdan Nature is so generous Land is for all When land ceases to be owned privately a new relationship will come into existence between the people of every village Today, the smaller and poorer landholders are clinging to their meagre holding The biggest landlords will not give up their ownership until the smaller have first given it up In Bihar we succeeded in getting lakhs of acres because hundreds of small land-holders gave up their land first

6 Private ownership in land can never remain It has to go Great thinkers all over the world have testified to this thought Sixty years ago, Tolstoy preached that private ownership in land was immoral The time-spirit speaks through such men Subrahmanya Bharathi, the great poet of Tamiland, had been saying the same thing some forty years ago. Surely he had no ill will towards the landlord He was a great patriot and lover of Tamiland and wrote out of real compassion "Have compassion for the opponent" was his prayer When such a person says something it is not the voice of God or the time-spirit? Take one of the ancient Tamil classics, the *Thirukural* It has said, "Do not forget that even the bones in your body are not your private possession" He who has love in heart has no sense of possession Whatever he has he gives for the good of all The land problem in India and Asia can be solved overnight if all care to act according to what men of wisdom have taught us

7. The *Vedas* have also said that land is the mother of all "*Matha bhumi Putroham prithivyaha*", All religions speak with one voice that land belongs to all The spirit of the age is again demanding the closing of private ownership Why not then accept this with humility and goodwill?

8 Men of God like Manickavachagar and Nammalwar in Tamilnad have demonstrated that it is possible for a person to give up all sense of ownership, even of his own body. Society honoured

and adored such men But people never imitated them They said these were exceptional men Today we see people are giving Gramdan freely i e , they are giving up their ownership over land This a tremendous achievement It shows that men are capable of real large-heartedness The climate of opinion all over the world is undergoing transformation For instances if Egypt was attacked by France and England 50 years ago, could there have been any power in the world who would have cried halt to them ? They would have bombed the whole of Egypt out of existence and gone scot-free But today we saw that the whole world condemned Britain and France for their unjust aggression World conscience has begun to raise its voice and world opinion is gathering strength now

9 Many doubted of Gramdan would make much headway in Tamilnad No one believed that it would be given in this State I, for one, never shared these doubts I felt certain that what had happened in Bihar and Orissa would happen in Tamilnad After seven months of persistent work there is a visible change Gramdan is in the air Every day be new Gramdan is being reported It must be noted that Gramdan in Tamilnad is not the same as Gramdan in Orissa In Koraput, Gramdan began in an area that was hilly, sparsely populated and inhabited by Adivasis But in Tamilnad conditions are quite different Here land in fertile Population is not sparse People are educated The message of Gramdan has the power to influence the men of simple faith as well as the intellectuals

10 We are building up a new society in the villages The village republic in our ideal but that does not mean that we should neglect the intelligentsia who live in the towns Our Universities must be made to take note of Gramdan and make their own contribution for the development of the Sarvodaya pattern of society

11 What do we mean by achieving the Bhoodan revolution in this year ?—We mean, first, to establish the right of the landless labourers overland That is the beginning Then the next step would be to say all would be the owners of land Just as we all share light, air, and water alike land should become common to all This brings us to the present stage when we say that no individual can own land All land belongs to the village, that is, to be village community When we talk of a particular target

within a time limit it is only an expression of the sense of urgency and the importance of the cause The Time-spirit is with us and, therefore, things that would have taken fifty years before, are being now achieved in a month or two

II

12 In Gramdan villages individual ownership comes to an end But in another sense it increases An individual owns no land, but he can very well say that all land belongs to him Just as a mother has a ubiquitous authority in the house, or a little bady has common rights so an individual citizen will have power and rights in the village Whatever is done for the development and welfare of the individual will add to the social well-being and strength Just as money is kept in a bank today it will be invested in society in Gramdan villages It removes insecurity and anxiety Sarvodaya looks on life as an integrated whole It believes that the individual and society are indivisible

13 I admit that if people have given Gramdan after understanding its implications, the result will be definitely for the good Equality is a blessing It is bound to make for happiness Does not the peasant level his field ? He knows how a field yields better when it is levelled and made even The same is true of society Social equality is the real strength of the people God's universe moves by the Law that is even at the bar of the scales In the *Koran* the Prophet has said the Lord created the scales Justice means equality Does not the sun give light and warmth to all equally ? If he were to discriminate what would happen to us ? Death treats us all equally He visits the rich and the poor with impartiality It is the idea of "mine" and "thine", or in other words, it is the inequality which we create out of our greed, which is at the root of all our suffering and conflict Equality is solvent but we are afraid of it

14 The exponents of the theory of incentives forget that if higher gains induce me to greater efforts it may also tempt someone else to rob me The theory of incentive is bound to create inequality and conflict Security and peace can come only when there is equality Gramdan in the road to prosperity and happiness Individual ownership in land is not going to last. When you understand the truth of this you will not hesitate to give

whatever you have to the common pool There is a joy in giving and sharing

15 Let us be very clear about the main object of our movement Redistribution of land in a village is only the first step Our movement aims at creating a new man, not only in India but also all over the world It is worldwide in its implications We are restricting the scope of our activities only to our country just now, because we feel that if we could show results here it is bound to affect the world Land distribution in India is only the first step of the movement When we say that land belongs to God it really means that it should be free for use for all the men in the world It should be open for the beasts and the birds also Some States in India are very densely populated For instance, in South Kerala the density of population is two thousand per square mile, while in Vindhya Pradesh it is only two hundred Similarly in Australia there is plenty of unoccupied space If immigration is free, five times the present population can live there But the Australians do not desire that outsiders should come there and disturb their security and culture In this age of science such parochialism can have no place We must have large minds and hearts and learn to think of the whole world as one That is the only way to peace

16 Bhoodan is not a reformist activity It aims to bring about a radical change in society It wants to do away with all the class divisions that exist today It wants to create real equality Gramdan may be said to lay the foundations of the new order It ends private ownership in land

17 When a village is given in Gramdan people begin to speak of "we', and " ours" That is s first lesson in the way of devotion And as people begin to value work for common good, selfish desire begins to disappear "We" and "ours" is also ultimately transformed into "unto Him" Everything that we do, by God's will and dedicate it to Him Bhoodan wants human society to take this step Gramdan is the first lesson in the new way The people of a Gramdan village share their joys and sorrows together Man does not exploit man Sorrow and suffering of one is shared by all Men will work according to their talents for the common good A teacher, a singer, a craftsman, a farmer, each will follow his vocation The village will give each a share from the annual harvest All will feel as one and share a

common life

18 I feel that Gramdan and the way of true devotion will spread rapidly People in South have that feeling The temple will be the place where the people of the village will meet and listen to religious discourses and devotional songs Devotion will express itself in all their day-to-day activities Devotion means compassion, friendship and respect Every one will have all the three ever present in one's heart The fact that we are getting Gramdan shows that the stream of devotion has not dried up We must "dig channels" and carry the waters of true devotion to every door Bhoodan is trying to do this

19. I expect that villages which have more land would invite a few landless from other villages to come and settle down in their village But these are questions for the future Let us concentrate for the time being on getting Gramdan and explain the implications of it very clearly to every person Then there will be no difficulty Our people are large-hearted and they will learn to accommodate all

20 Some people say that I have come to abolish ownership Today everyone owns a little piece of land or property and is a small owner That only makes people petty, narrow-minded and quarrelsome So they become slaves of their servants I want them to give up their petty ownership so that they will become masters of their own destiny which is something great

21 Today they are disunited and weak Anybody can go and disrupt their life, bring misery and poverty to them Some one comes and starts on oil mill and as a result there is unemployment The villagers are helpless against the mill-owner But if it is a Gramdan village, or a Gramdan Taluk, they will be able to withstand any outside attack successfully Therefore, even during the election I am going from village to village spreading the idea of Gramdan

22. Gramdan is the expresion of the spirit of the ege It asks people not only to break the narrow domestic walls and consider the whole village as one family but goes further and asks all the villagers to meet together to consider their common problems and solve them with one mind. There are problems of drinking water, irrigatson, education, sanitation, employment and hundred others The villagers must tackle them together No one will have any exclusive interest. Whatever one does for himself will be

also for all

23 When a man ceases to think of his person and dedicates himself to the the good of the society he will be happy It is the identification of oneself with the body or self-aggrandisement that brings in misery and unhappiness When a man will come to think about the good of the community he will have found the key to happiness

III

24 This is the essence of Gramdan In it there is no individual possession of land, labour and wealth Each owns everything Each will offer his all to the community and the community will take care of him People think it a great sacrifice to give Gramdan Gramdan is not a sacrifice but a sound investment in good living

25 Even in villages which are small with barely a hundred families there is no social cohesion or comradeship Each one lives for himself and all of them are exploited ruthlessly by the trader, moneylender, advocate and doctor from the town They also exploit one another when they can Isolation corrodes the human feeling in man Like the erosion of the soil there is a deterioration in the quality of human beings The intrusion of the money economy has made things worse There is litigation between father and son Marriages in the family add substantially to the indebtedness of the householder All this has reduced man to the position of a beast He has lost all sense of human dignity

26 In a Gramdan village all this will change Man will live in happy union with the society around him The whole village will be one family Private ownership in land will end No debts will be incurred for a marriage in the family The whole village will contribute towards the expenses

27 There will be one shop in the village Evey householder will have his "labour-hours" entered into the register to his credit He will not be exploited be the trader from the town People will learn to live together in happy co-operation

28 Gramdan substitutes a wider ownership in place of the narrow ownership Today they are busy electing representatives and ministers, The voters are the real masters The elected

representatives are the servants But in actual life the anonymous voter is forgotten and has no initiative or power In Gramdan all this will change

29 All the affairs of the village will be in the hands of the people They will decide what they want to do You will have a sense of owning all the land of the Taluk together So we are asking people to throw off the burden of individual owneship Individual ownership is the root cause of our unhappiness and slavery If individual ownership in land is ended a new co-operative and collective social life will emerge Every family will work for the good of the village and a new life will emerge if the whole taluk lives and works as one family

30 As an example, in a village of a hundred families, each family will be represented by one person The hundred persons will form the General Village Council It will meet once in a month This Council will unanimously nominate 10 to 15 people who will form a committee This committee will meet more often and will be responsible for the day-to day administration of the village The decisions of the committee will be ratified by the Council The General Council may be said to be a policy-making body while the smaller committee will be its executive branch

31 It is a moral pressure People know that the absentee landlord cannot live without the help of the villagers When all the people in a village come together and act as one family they create a moral force which has an effect on other people including the absentee landlord The absentee landlord will be 'impelled' by inner conviction or sense of social guilt He will not be subjected to any violent pressure

32 Gramdan is a beginning and not an end It only lays a firm foundation on which a new society can be built up You can form a village republic when you are self-sufficient. The village carpenter, the tailor, the oilman, the weaver must now get employment in the village itself You must not allow private ownership in land to grow up again Land belongs to God

33 The outstanding debt will be taken over by the village community Attempt will be made to reduce it by negotiations with the money lender and whatever remains would be paid by annual instalments by the whole village No one will be free to raise new loans individually. Even marriages would be celebrated

by the village community These difficulties will vanish when lakhs of villages are given as Gramdan The money-lender will then begin to appreciate the significance of the change

34 Security and safety can be had onlv if we learn to think and work for the good of all Those who have wealth must give a part of it willingly for the good of society Land will belong to the whole village Gramdan is something more than the pooling of land It is an initiation into a new way of thinking and lining You will experience a new joy, energy and enthusiasm not experienced before

35 The feeling of sanctity in private property has probably grown because of the family system in India People are afraid that the family system would disintegrate if private property comes to an end The family is an ancient institution It helps man to develop consideration, control and sympathy No doubt it has been one of the civilising influences Gramdan does not aim at breaking the family system On the contrary it is an attempt to extend it to the whole village In fact, private property has been responsible for creating divisions in the family Bhoodan is broadening and widening the family feeling to the whole village

There is also a feeling that once land is pooled together and private ownership is ended the owner will become just a labourer This also is a wrong idea

36 Gramdan is a new discovery, but it should lead to greater thought and investigation How will it halp in building up an integrated society in which their is do exploitation and rivalry or inequally ? It is quite possible that differences may arise between two Gramdan villages Disputes can become serious and there may even be classes How can this be prevented ? Gramdan by itself is not a panacea which will solve all our problems The need of constant thought, vigilance and investigation is ever there That is why it is very important that all the implications of Gramdan should be discussed by the villagers Village workers should study the various problems that arise in the village and find out how they can be solved in the spirit of Sarvodaya

37 I am looking forward to the day when all the five lakh villages would be given as Gramdan Who would then be responsible for development in all these villages ? Even the Government

will find it very difficult to cope with the problem It may be beyond their capacity

38 In a Gramdan village the dynamics must be provided by the people themselves Their urge to bring about a change can be the only effective agent of development Otherwise it would be like a body without a soul In some countries attempts were made to awaken feelings of envy, rivalry spite and hatred to create a social dynamics But it created more violence and ill will We must on love and goodwill in this work

39 It will be beyond the power of the Government to give help to all villages even if the Gramsabhas were to ask for it If we had considered development work as a private responsibility we would never have asked and received thousands of villages in Gramdan The Gramdan villages will be disappointed if they look forward to outside aid Bhoodan movement is a movement of giving and not taking So the poorest has first to give at least his labour

40 The meaning of Gramdan is a solemn resolve made by the villagers to manage their own affairs They will take all the decisions henceforth It is their law which will prevail in the village They will decide how land should be distributed and cultivated and what should be grown The will decide that they will make their own cloth, that it will be woven on a handloom The Government will not be able to force power-looms on the villagers In all the sphers of activities which are vitally and directly related to the life of the villagers the Government will accept the desisions of the villagers

41 We have got over 200 villages of Gramdan in the district of Madura I would like to distribute them to the Congress, P S P and Communist workers for development. It will be a good experiment All of them will realise how much they have in common when they apply themselves seriously to the actual work of development in a constructive spirit A constructive worker has to work at both the ends simultaneously He has to purify his heart and mind and serve the people I have no doubt that the kingdom of righteousness would soon be realised

42 If ownership in land goes, ownership of factories and houses will not lag behind If all the villages in a taluk are given as Gramdan can townships and cities remain unaffected ? Can

they run away to some other place ? They will naturally fall in line with the villages and begin to serve them

43 They will not exploit the villager The same is true of money-lenders Giving money to the needy is really not a debt, it is really a *dan* The moneylenders will have to change their lives They will be looked after, as the ruling princes are being looked after by India, provided they accept to live and work like the other villagers

44 But let it be understood clearly that increasing agricultural production is certainly not the aim and object of Bhoodan and Gramdan That would be only incidental Its main object is to widen man's loyalty to the entire society It hopes to create a climate where man will feel the same solicitude for the least in society as he feels for his own children Gramdan will end duality between individual and social life They would be like the two sides of a coin. This is bound to bring about greater production and happiness But if for some reasons production did not increase it would not matter Gramdan, thus, is trying to give a new vision or a purpose to people Human life is full of joy and suffering People can fight bravely against calamities that befall them Floods and cyclones devastate lands every now and then, Man shares calamities and in sharing gets the strength to conquer them

45 It is obvious that every one must have a minimum of food, clothing and shelter Elementary wants must be satisfied But man thirsts after something more Though he spends most of his time in earning a living and is ever worried about some material want, he is never satisfied till he finds some purpose or significance in life There is, if I may say so, a spiritual hunger in him which worldly possession can never slake The elaborate religious rituals which we find in all religious are an attempt to supply this inner need of man People offer elaborate worship to the idols, read religious books, undertake arduous pilgrimages, give charity in order to quench the deep hunger for real communion Surely, none of these brings any material return to them But it does give them an inner spiritual satisfaction

46 I hope that the young men of our country will be filled with enthusiasm and will dedicate themselves to Gramdan It is not enough if we get a Gramdan here and there Whole *talukas* and districts must be given in Gramdan There is so much talk

about the five-year plan in the country But so long as this fundamental transformation does not take place planning from the top will not end the poverty and misery of the villagers Gramdan is the foundation of social reconstruction

7

SAMPATTI-DAN

VINOBA BHAVE

I

THE ECONOMICS OF SAMPATTI-DAN

1 I had in mind the idea of Sampatti-dan Yagna even when I started Bhoodan Now the stage to distribute lands has come and it is quite necessary we should start in right earnest the Sampatti-dan Yagna Ploughs and seeds have to be necessarily supplied to all the landless poor so that they may begin work

2 It is in towns I wish to carry on this Sampatti-dan movement on a large scale I appeal to all—from the ministers and merchants down to the poor orderlies—to contribute their mite to this They should do it with the permission and consent of their family members No gift short of the dignity and status of the donor can be accepted It should be received only from those alone who really feel that they should consider the poor as a member of their own family Poor people may give only little, yet that has to be received, for it creates a real sense of Dharma Gifts through articles instead of actual cash, are the best forms of Dan In the purchase of khadi, half of the price paid is in fact an indirect form of gift to the poor artisans Such a gift is called a "Gupta-dan" (hidden gift)

3 Gupta-dan is considered to be the best The beauty of it lies in that neither the donor feels the pride of it, nor the receiver suffers from the humiliation behind Expenditures in connection

with pujas, *sraddah* ceremonies and travels may have to be stopped They will not in any way advance our Dharma

4 I appeal to one and all in the country to take a vow to buy only such articles are are produced with the hands of the poor in our villages Such purchases will be the purest of all gifts It creates the bond of love between the purchaser and the producer If you buy Rs 100 worth of khadi, you are indirectly making a gift of Rs 50, i e , half the price you pay to the poor producer So you can be considered as one who has contributed a gift of Rs 50 to this Sampattidan Yagna This applies not only to khadi but to all other articles made by the hands of the poor Thus it enables every individual, though poor, to contribute his share to this Sampattidan But to the rich I appeal to give at least 1/6 of their wealth They can give even more.

THE THREE PURPOSES

5 For the time being these are the three main purposes for which this Sampatti-dan will be utilized 1 To supply implements and seeds, etc to the poor who will be put in possession of lands under the distribution scheme The major portion of the fund will be spent for this 2 To meet the expenditure to maintain workers in villages Our plan is that for every seven villages there will be one worker who will spend a day in each village in every week If this scheme materializes there will be a number of Loka-Sevaks (those who serve the people) in India 3 To propagate Sarvodaya literature and the ideals of Dharma among the people in a simple way As work proceeds and if other items come in, they can be incorporated

6 The donor himself will spend the money on these items only Towards the end of the year he will summit his accounts to us If any alterations are to be made we will instruct him and he will do so Why I have fixed a portion of the income alone instead of a fixed amount is because, when the donor's income dwindles he need pay less only and if it becomes nil he need not pay anything at all This will continue of the life of the donor

7 "*Thyektena Bhunjeeta*" is the principle behind the gift This means "renouncing thou shalt eat "

There is much of the lust in us today. So first we should give and then only east If we cultivate this habit of giving to others before enjoying and understand the principle behind it, the

poor in the villages never suffer and every home in each village will be a bank from which they can easily draw

8 In this way an atmosphere of drama will be created all round Every child would say that its father used to eat only after feeding the poor This culture if imbibed from childhood will make everyone grow into a generous and sacrificing citizen ever ready to die for his country He becomes strong, courageous and devoted to duty because he is nursed by the purest of food He upholds the cultural tradition handed down to us from ancient days

THE LIGHT IN EVERY ONE

9 There is a *jyothi* (light) burning in every individual It cannot be extinguished, however, much one may try There are many kinds of desires and impulses in man Here he offers lands as gift while there he exicts the cultivator Persons offering lands to this Yagna at the same time evicting tenants are committing a fraud unto themselves Man is an enlightened being. The real essence in him tells him to make gifts The surrounding circumstances make him forget himself for the time being and do evil unto others He should disentangle himself from such influences He cannot do it all on a sudden He should, step by step, train to obey the good conscience within him If he practises it day by day, there will come a time when he will succeed and grow full and true unto himself

10 There is an independent basic principle behind this Sampatti-dan, part from the idea to render help to the landless peasants Just as land cannot be the exclusive property of anyone like air and light, weath also cannot be owned by anyone in particular None can be the Lord of Bhumi (Earth) or the Lord of Laxmi (wealth) Laxmi is the mother If wealth accumulates in the hands of any, it is not due to his own efforts alone, it is due to the collective effort of all and so it belongs to all in society Individuals are only the means to produce wealth and each holds it for the benefit of all The father never thinks that whatever he earns is entirely his and due to his sole effort He works for the family and he can find happiness only if all in the family co-operate with him Thus every member of the family gets the right on the family wealth Today man cares for the limited circle of his family alone If he ponders a little deep he will find

that the entire wealth in his hands belongs to the society in general We are only the guardians of wealth and a part out of it alone we can take for ourselves and that only in the form of a *prasad* from the Lord of all to whom it is offered This is the basic principle behind this Sampatti-dan

THE CONSTITUTION

11 People say, that to refute private ownership of property, is against the State's Constitution This Constitution is not a heaven-sent gift It is a creation of man and so when man's ideals undergo changes the Constitution also will have to be changed It is not all desired by me that this change should be brough about by force It is my right to make people understand the ideal and it is the duty of people to grasp them Does it mean that people go against the Constitution if they understand this principle ? The Constitution should grow and expand day by day

12 The sense of ownership should cease to exist The idea in our people that they should get more money because they have more intellect, more strength and they are doing a work of superior nature, is wrong Suppose Thulasidas is living today and his literature goes into hands of another man and that man offers him Rs 5 000 for it Will he be ready to accept it ? I don't mean to say that people should not get anything for the work they do. I say it should not be in terms of money. I have often asked why the President's emolument is more than that of the Prime Minister. It is understandable if it can be proved that a man occupying a higher status is more hungry than the one in a lower status One friend related to us a very good example He said "We wear on the head a cap costing eight *annas* and on the feet shoes worth eight rupees Does it mean from this that our feet have a higher status than our head ?"

13 One man saved the life of another drowning in a river Can we value service in terms of money, say two *annas* for the labour, of ten minutes ? True this act of saving his life involves mannual labour, but it is selfless and full of compassion and love. The mother does service for the children Can they be evaluated in terms of money ? The teacher teaches the student and transforms even the brute into a man How can we assess its value in rupees ? The brother does service, the sister does service Do they do it for money ? If anyone asks me as to how many seconds

are there in a mile I cannot answer him I can only say that there are so many furlongs in mile It is impossible to equate furlongs or yards to seconds In the same way it is impossible to convert the values of moral service and dharma in terms of rupees, *annas* and pies All men who do service with faith and devotion not expecting anything in return for the same, would attain salvation They command respect from all and become blessed by God Moral values can never be measured in terms of material values I find delight in service How can I assess its price ? On what basis will I assess it ?

14 Today society considers theft as a sin Yet some people commit theft It is bad to steal and society condemns it It should also recognise hoarding too as a sin like theft Both are sins alike The miser is the father of theft If there are no misers and hoarders, there will be no theft at all in this world

15 Suppose anyone offers one-sixth of this earning for life Still he cannot be taken to have fully understood the ideal behind this Sampatti-dan Yagna In case he owns any particular industrial concern, he should also consider all the labours under him as co-sharers along with him and should give each his share as a partner Thereafter he should offer if anything remains for the benefit of society If he does this he can be considered as one who has understood this principle and as a man of real sacrifice Whatever little he takes for himself is the *prasad* of the Yagna Gandhiji keenly desired that everyone should consider himself as the trustee of his wealth Through this Sampatti-dan programme that principle can now be realized by us This real economics and science of sampatti-dan

II

IMPLICATION OF SAMPATTI-DAN

Excepting Bhoodan and Sampatti-dan we will not take or ask any other form of money gift or *dan*, this is a condition which we have voluntarily accepted in the interest of our work We are engaged in solving a mighty problem which calls for the mobilization of all our energy Raising of money-subscriptions I regard as particularly dangerous

We should certainly ask for one-sixth of the total land but we cannot refuse if what is offered is less than that Of course, if it is

extremely little, it should not be accepted because, it degrades the donor

About *Sampatti-dan*, we should observe very great care, because he who signs the pledge is required to continue the *dan* year after year for his life One may sign it on the impulse of the moment but fail to fulfil it subsequently This should be avoided, because it will spoil the atmosphere We should, therefore, make sure that the donor signs with full faith and after full consultations with the members of his family

The donor of the Bhoodan may suggest the name of a deserving recipient But generally our method of distribution before an open assembly of the local population is to be preferred The donor will do well to realize that it is better to donate without any conditions

Our work may be conceived as an attempt on our part to explain to the people the right view of things and securing the land-gift as a token of their understanding and accepting it

III

TECHNIQUE OF SAMPATTI-DAN

(An Interview with Vinoba)

In his footmarch across the country, Vinoba has been coming in intimate contact with people belonging to various schools of thought and to different walks of life Often they want him to discuss their problems Sometimes they ask him to clarify the diverse aspects of his growing movement When he was at a sub-divisional town the other day local businessmen came to see him They included both the young enthusiasts and the grey stalwarts

"You demand land from the zamindars or landholders", began an energetic youth "But have you got any programme for us of the business community too ? What is our *dharma* in the present situation ?"

"Yes I have", replied Vinoba "For about a year and a half I concentrated on land because it is a fundamental issue Later I began to talk of *Sampatti-dan Yagna* too Its essence is that one must share what he or she has Donating four *annas* or eight *annas*

out of every hundred rupees is no *dharma* I want you to offer your contribution intelligently "

They followed him very attentively He went on "What is the reputation of the businessman today ? He is very much ill-talked about Our *Shastras* say that business is religion even as agriculture is Religion cannot mean that we should go on indulging ourselves even when our people are in agony When Gita classifies business as religion, it also enjoins sacrifice, selfless service, integrity, etc "

Vinoba then said, "How is it that the business community commands little respect today ? The Marwaris, the Vohras, etc, do not enjoy a very enviable fame It is very unfortunate that one who was once a great servant of the society should full in public estimation Once upon a time a businessman in India was called "Mahajan" (a great man) He was regarded as a protector and benefactor When people went out for pilgrimage they deposited their money and valuables with him They got it back safe on return They reposed their faith in the businessman Today it is all distrust There must be some reason behind it The reason is that money dominates our life and dealings Man counts far less Whence we find interest and compound interest being charged Otherwise, how could businessmen, coming from sixty thousand miles away destory the trade here and establish their business as well as Raj ? Even today India lacks businessmen in the true sense of the term They are generally brokers There is *pap* (sin) behind the bad name "

After a pause, Vinoba added, "I want to raise the businessman's prestige You have always helped good causes There is compassion too You spend a lot in ceremonies, pilgrimage, etc But that *dan* does not carry society forward *Dharma* must be regularly performed It should have a ceaseless flow I worry little how much you earn Be it as it may But I do want you to allot to me a share of your household expenditure, i e , for food clothing, medicine, travelling, festivities, children's education, etc Take me as a member of your family

"Land distribution is going on today Besides land, we have to provide the landless with seed, bullocks and irrigation facilities We have to enable them to stand on their own feet Hence, the importance and necessity of *Sampatti-dan Yagna* Whatever you will offer me in Sampatti-dan will remain with you But you will

disburse it according to my directions I keep myself free, ready to obey His call whenever it comes Mine is not to implicate any body I, therefore, say Please consider me as an additional member of your family If you are four, I am the fifth, if five I am the sixth ' You have to share throughout your life In brief, this is my demand "

There was a silence for a while Vinoba called upon his audienee to clear their doubts or questions, if any

With his head bent low, in a discoursive mood, in aged businessman quietly put in, "There is already income-tax which we have to pay to the Government Now here is another tax which you ask us to pay "

"If your son is a tax upon you," submitted Vinoba, "this is also a tax " What I say is simply this "Share a part of your food with me If you have more of it, give me more, if less then less If your parents and children are a tax, Vinoba too is a tax "

Vinoba added, 'I am a thorough partner in your weal and woe You must not consider me an outsider, but as one of your own "

Hearing this, another stalwart promptly came forward "The member of the family works and suffers for the family But this new member shall do nothing and enjoy everything "

Some of the faces reflected that they agreed with the questioner Welcoming the query, Vinoba observed, "This is a very relevant issue indeed But on a little consideration you will realise that you have to invest a lot for your family-member Often you have to suffer losses on his account But if you give me a place in your home, won't it raise your status ? Won't it lift up the level of your home ? Vinoba will certainly be more helpful and serviceable to you than any other member "

Again a calmness Breaking it a middle aged man remarked, "The condition of the businessman is so bad these days "

"That of the land-holder is worse," pointed out Vinoba "When *dharma* prospers, it influences the entire society Please remember one thing those who give should give gladly, and those who do not should not be ill-spoken of If somebody does not feel inspired to give today, leave him for the moment No envy, no bitterness Nothing but pure love lasts I believe that my money lies in every house You have to earn it Also you have to spend it And you have also to maintain the accounts Only you will

have my advice for its disposal At the end of the year you will send its account This is a work of true religion "

"And suppose somebody fills in the Sampattidan form but does not act up to it " This difficulty was put fourth by a friend

"Then God will see to him I shall simply tear your from I need not worry at all In fact, this is a relationship between you and your God "

This clarification set them a thinking seriously Then a young man put the question "You want us to regard you as a member of the family If we are five today, you come as the sixth But if a few years after we become eight, you will continue to demand one-sixth as of old "

"Certainly not," said Vinoba immediately, "I shall then be your ninth member and ask you only one-ninth "

This came to them as a happy surprise. They felt lighter and began to talk about population "Don't your think that excess of population is responsible for the bad condition today ?"

"No, I do not My feeling is that inertia and want of resolve are responsible for it "

Then followed the interesting question "You demand a share out of the domestic expenditure Why do you leave incomes untouched ? There are some people who have a very large income, but their expenses are low "

"After all, where is that income ? Is it in the banks or not ?"

"Of course !"

"Then it is likely to be spent by somebody else somewhere We shall go to that man This is a work which requires us to approach every home "

The discussion was drawing to an end The last doubt was

"Why do you want the landholder to offer both land and Sampattidan ? One thing should suffice "

"Do you think that more of religious practice will drive him to hell ?"

A wave of smile lept on all faces Vinoba continued "Abdication of land ownership is the basic proposition Land is the prime means of production The landholder can enjoy double *dharma* Likewise, there is also another *dharma* for the business-men And it is this—you must conduct your business honestly This *dharma* you would have to observe strictly. But first let me

get a foothold in your home The rest will follow "

"Will you then accept Sampatti-dan from a drunkard too ?"

"You are right I would ask him to give up drinking But at first I would urge upon him to accept the new *dharma*. Rest assured he cannot cheat me My very beard will frighten him." Then he asked with a smile "will it not ?"

They all burst into laughter at it

Vinoba closed with the words, "I want you to ponder deeply over it And may God give you the courage to act upto your convictions "

IV

ULTIMATE AIM OF SAMPATTI-DAN

It may so appear that Sampatti-dan work is meant for the selected workers only Abundant wealth is owned by some exclusive or selected persons and hence it appears that ordinary workers would not be of much avail for this work There is no doubt that the owners of large fortunes, who live in large cities, are to be made the participants in this Yagna This constitutes a large part of our work in this field It is true, therefore, that the services of the ordinary workers could not be engaged in it But, all the same, it is not true that is the main or the major part of our work, which, in fact, is to spread the ideology amongst the common people and to reach all through the strength thus generated Thus, it is in this part of our work that all the workers in the field are needed The basic idea behind this work should be well understood In spite of being extremely poor, one has to perform his own duties for Sampatti-dan And, therefore, the common people have to be approached I have more faith in the Sampattidan which, when coming to us like the rains in the form of drops, is more valuable and advantageous It is these raindrops that make streams and rivers

False Value of Wealth

We have to enter into the lives of the rich people in the cities and this can be done through Sampattidan It has its own importance and significance which must be understood Most of the workers think that their chief aim is to inspire those who own

enormous wealth and propery to relinquish them The rest of the work, according to them, is but a means to this end But, it should in reality, be realised that wealth is to be made valueless or worthless Quite unnecessarily we attach importance to wealth and thus prove ourselves to be those giving dignity to it Respect for wealth is coming down in these days I do not believe that the distribution of wealth under these circumstances is of any great necessity or utility, but, on the contrary, that, if we can do it, our main work is to make the wealth valueless

Labour, the "Currency" of Exchange

People should have enough strength to refuse to part with anything at the point of revolver but they have not yet gained such strength When they do so, they would, likewise, not exchange any article or produce in the lure of currency notes or coins, just as they would refuse to part with anything when threatened with a revolver What we desire is the attitude that any produce of our labour can be had only in exchange of physical labour and that we cannot and would not give any article in exchange of money If people achieve this strength, all the wealth and money would prove to be totally worthless What is wealth after all ? The paper currency printed at the Nasik Press is being considered as wealth at present, but it is not so I am not talking about Vedanta here, but only of the most modern economies

It is not at all necessary to envy the rich and wealthy, nor is it essential to redistribute wealth

The Real Sampatti-dan

The whole problem thus assumes a different form The real form of Sampatti-dan is Shramdan Labour alone is wealth We can, therefore, call Shramdan as Sampatti-dan What we have received in Sampatti-dan in Koraput district in Orissa is both Shramdan and Sampatti-dan There the donors would donate the produce of twelve days in a year It means that they will donate to the society their labour of twelve days every year To donate the produce of one's labour is the true and pure *dana*, i e , the gift or donation This *dana* of the wealth produced by physical labour is divine or *daivi* Sampatti-dan, i e , *Asuri Sampatti vs Daivic Sampatti*

The Golden Way

Sometimes the people, while welcoming me, offer me garlands of flowers I refuse to accept them and ask them whether they have themselves done the gardening and whether the flowers they had brought were the produce of their own physical labour Their answer had been that the flowers were purchased I then, reminded them that, had the reference in Gita to *Patram, pushpam, toyam* (i e , the leaf, the flower, the fruit and water) been to the purchased things, mention would have instead been made of gold silver, diamonds, etc

Offering of wealth produced by one's own physical labour has its own importance or value We have to convince the people that we should produce most of our requirements of life by our own labour and that there would then, not exist the necessity or utility of wealth as such, which we find today This is how we can make all hoarded wealth worthless

When I am having talks with the Communist friends, I ask them "What do you find among the rich which is to be envied of? Do you envy their idleness or lethargy, cowardice and miserliness ? If they are industrious, it is then all right if you envy their industriousness and be adroit by so doing " They, then, agree with this view

Break the Infatuation for Wealth

This is no *Vedanta* This is the cobweb of illusion which we are unable to cut ourselves away from and that is why we are attached to wealth Our friends also accept this point that as long as the social order and concept of our mind would not change, infatuation for wealth also would not end It is said that this is a difficult task, but that is why we intend to carry it through From this point of view, therefore, each one of us has the requisite strength and capacity to procure Sampatti-dan or, in other words, has the capacity and strength to break the power behind wealth

Someone gave me some money some years ago, I simply threw it away There is a story about Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Someone placed a gold coin in his palm while he was asleap It painted him so much that his hand itself shrank Was he, do you think, a coward ? And was it, therefore, that he felt the pain as if he was bitten by a scorpion ? When he was

seeking God in the entire universe, did he not see Him in this gold coin also ? The fact, however, is that he refused to have what did not belong to all While having a stroll with a friend once at Wardha, a friend found on the road a gold ornament When asked as to what was to be done with it, I replied that it had to be left where it was found or, alternately, as a true citizen, be handed over to the authorities even though the then government was a foreign one My advice, however, was to throw it away like an ordinary piece of stone

Perpetuate the Dignity of Labour

In one of my addresses, I had once remarked that the currency notes should be burnt off in Holi festival Following this advice, a friend actually did so Complaining about it, someone wrote to Sri Kishorlalbhai that the opinion of Vinoba should not be taken literally Occasionally I am giving uncommon answers, so much so that when someone asked me as to what should be done with the Gandhi Memorial Fund, my reply was that it should be drowned into the sea so that inflation may come down ! I meant that we intend to make all wealth useless and and perpetuate the dignity of labour Therefore, when Kishorlalbhai desired me to reply to the objection referred to, I had written to him that though my opinion could not be taken literally, the world would not be put to any loss, if someone actually did so !

Dignity of Sampatti-dan

With this outlook and attitude, we have to go ahead with the work of Sampatti-dan When wealth would not be respected, it will flow before your feet and yet you will not even touch it Herein lies the dignity of Sampatti-dan which implies that all wealth is to be made totally devoid of any value

A friend had remarked the other day that he liked what I said The rich, however, are not attracted towards it and are afraid of us, because we are talking about an *aparigrahi Samaj* a society based on non-possession It is true that we have to carry on this work of Sampatti-dan with this view before us.

V

"KINGDOM OF COMPASSION" APPEAL TO COMMERCIAL COMMUNITY

Perhaps it is only in India that commerce is considered a righteous way of living All over the world it is accepted that commerce should be done honestly. Honesty is righteous as truthfulness is righteous But only in India has commerce been lifted up to be by itself a righteous way of living Such is our social ordering In the division of society, men of commerce have been divided into a class—Vaisyas, to whom commerce itself is Dharma Our ancients have so ordained, and this is our national characteristic

It is said that the *Vaisya* who carries on commerce without the desire of personal gain and with a sense of service attains the same Moksha—liberation—which is got by a Brahmin who pursues steadfastly Vedic learning This is a grand concept Herein all the social functions are given an equal place of importance As steadfast and *Nishkama*—not desiring the fruits—Vaisya gets the Moksha which the Brahmin gets Will there be any difference between the Mokshas attained by these two ? There can be no difference in such a state It is a grand concept to propound that, he be a Vaisya or a Brahmin or a Kshatriya, if only he pursues his calling without the desire for fruits and with steadfastness he gets the same Moksha So when a man of commerce pursues his calling with a sense of social duty, he becomes a Sadhak—a seeker and a Baktha The Dharma Sastras haven so much responsibility and importance to the men of commerce, and these ideas are well rooted in this country

It has been seen that in our spiritual thought we have given importance to *Daya-bhav*—compassion Human society should have love for the other living beings On account of this many have given up meat-eating Such is not the case in the other countries of the world Nowadays a few individuals and groups in the West are making efforts in this direction, calling themselves vegetarians But they are not so numerous as the non-meat-eaters of India. There are very many evils in our society and so we do not regard vegetarianism as we should. The evils have crept in the ways of our earning our livelihood. In spite of the evils that

have crept in, we cannot undervalue the significance of this great advance in direction of compassion

Of the groups who have by mercy given up meat the Vaisyas are significant *Daya* and *Ahimsa* are the special teachings of Jainism, but Bhakti cult has built it up considerably These have sway over the men of commerce and most of the *Vaisyas* are strict vegetarians We do not consider this to be anything small The fact that many of the commercial communities have given up meat eating being moved by compassion is no small matter and vast experience lies behind it The trust of the Dharma Sastras has been so fulfilled Thus, it can be truly said that the Vaisyas are so full of compossion Our social ordering and more so the economic ordering has become so vicious that in spite of oneself he begins to spite the rest Even in such times the business community is so full of *daya*

When we see so much of *daya* in a community should we not explore the ways of utilising that for national good ? I take it that this special characteristic of this community is our national characteristic This community has the other characteristic that of organising affairs, but of that we cannot take any special national pride, as business-men all over have this ability This community possessing the organising capacity and the special characteristic of *Daya* can do much for the good of the country Compassion is not an ordinary virtue It has a great social value Without it no society can exist for a moment In Indian and Western societies very many services of compassion are being rendered All the medical aid rendered throughout is born of compassion Newer and newer treatments are discovered to reduce human suffering and to add to human happiness Even when war is going on the Red-Cross and other volunteers go to help the wounded So everywhere in some form or other acts of compassion are perpetually being rendered

Seer have described God as full of compassion In Islam God is styled Rahman and Rahim—the supremely merciful All the religions proclaim that mercy is the attribute of God Vaishnavas always think of and remember this attribute of God *Daya*—mercy, *kshama*—forgiveness, *karuna*—love, are the virtues that are cherished by humanity universally Even then it is said that love does not rule the world today The Raj is of Sakti—Force Force is the Patron Goddess of the State, Mercy and love are acting

the role of maids to Force

All governments think how best they can increase their strength but no government thinks of widening the field of human love The armed strength and its increase are their considerations No country thinks that if human love sways within its borders it will help to maintain peace in the world and that it can win the whole world by love It is an established fact that humanity pays allegiance to love Crores take up the name of the Saviour Christ drawn by his divine love There are forty crores of people crying victory to Lord Buddha, accepting his message of love Even today if crores and crores of people living or dying are being much influenced by any feeling, it is by human love

The influence of love is not hidden Even the governments elected by the people and run with their consent are thinking in terms of making themselves strong, and expanding their armed strength No country cares to spread the message of love

II

This is the 2500th year of Lord Buddha Many countries of the world are celebrating this occasion, and we too are having elaborate festivities We take a pride that the Lord of Love was born in this land of ours We recognise and adore love, but at the same time are worshipping the Goddess of Force Are we hypocrites ? No, We have a strong idea that for individual development mercy is good, but for the social welfare there is need for force These are days of Science and we value social achievements more than the individual progress Therefore, even while recognising the value of love we do not allow it to govern all our affairs

We think that there is a good field of work for the businessmen of Hindustan They are ever full of mercy, they have given up meat eating and they are the best fitted for this new work God has allotted to them the work of establishing the Kingdom of love in our land But the businessman full of love keeps a *latiwala* to guard and protect him Is there not sufficient strength in love to protect him ? Why should people seek protection ? Because love does not fully sway over them When the businessman places at the disposal of his neighbours all his wealth and his organising ability, there will be no need to guard himself

In Bihar we went to worship in a Jain Mandir. As in Jail

there are enclosures, and enclosers and doors leading to the interior As in Jail *sentries* with guns were standing at the door-ways All the doors were closed, and were opened to let us in In the sanctum sanctorum there was the idol of Lord Mahavira The Lord scorned even clothes to protect the body from sun and rain, but when we went to have His Dharshan the doors well-guarded by *sentries* had to be opened to let us in Why should the Lord who was wandering fearless in the jungles of Bihar be so imprisoned ? It is so because the inerior of the Mandir is bedecked with gold Lord Mahavir did not relish the idea of accepting gold His followers regard his compassion, but equally value gold They think that gold sways the world Today the country which possess as the strongest—America—has half the gold of the world as its own We want both Mahavir and gold, regarding the equally We do not realise that they are irreconcilable and so post *sentries* to guard the Mandir While worshipping the Lord we felt that tears were rolling down the eyes of the *Murthy* We could not stand there for long, we felt intensely sad and returned We went there to have Dharshan of Mahapurusha—the Lord—and saw there the devil

We have to consider why the question of protection comes and why seek the aid of force while we greatly regard love It is so, for we have not based our lives on the foundation of love The businessmen of India should ponder over and they can do this We have some business friends who are full of love and highly spiritual It is no good to make a little use of love in social organisations They should pick up the courage to reconstruct society on the basis of love The business community of India are full of *Daya*, and they have the organising ability God has left for them a mighty task If love and organising ability combined cannot establish the kingdom of love, then hydrogen and oxygen-combined may not produce water

Today we are inviting them to accomplish this great task They want to be righteous, our ancients have had great trust in them They have great powers and should put them to save the world They should become servants of the society and as such get mixed in the society One such Vaisya was in our Hindustan and crores of people adore him From the beginning to the end he never forget that he was a Vaisya Who is there that does not know the loving services rendered by Mahatma Gandhi ? We

cannot say who he was He was pious like a *Brahmin*, daring like a *Kshatriya*, tenderly loving like a *Vaisya*, and steadfastly serving like a *Shudra* He was all that and if anything more, he was a Bania He tended the cows by accepting Go-seva, resuscitated the *charkha*, raised the importance of village industries and himself worked on leather With a wide vision he did much for his countrymen and trained others Is there a man greater than him in India or in the whole world ? In his name we call upon the business-men to come forward and save the world They know what Vaisya-Dharma is, if only they combine their love and organising ability for the social good, our government will be rid of all its ideas of the private sector

III

Our government is now telling us that we should organise on the socialist pattern and for that the sphere of private sector should be reduced and that of the public sector widened They want that the collective productive effort should increase and individual effort should diminish We do not quite understand this proposition when we heard of the conflict between these two sectors If any one asks us whether the work of the fingers is more valuable than the work of the hand, what reply can we give him as though the hand represents the public sector and the finger private sector ! The work of the fingers is the same as that of the hand Then where is the difference and how has it come ? If businessmen apply their love and organising capacity for social good, their private business would become a public sector as well

It is said in the *Vedas* that the man who is charitably minded and puts his wealth to the use of others will never be envied by any Others do not spite his wealth, for they consider it as a public bank No *sentry* will be needed to guard such wealth, for the neighbours will keep watch over it So the difference between the public and private sectors is merely illusory

When our government talks of the socialist pattern in has no reason to fear the business community. Vaisyas should come forward and ask the government what socialist pattern it aims at and assure it that they will accomplish it They should declare that their business will be for service and would not take a pie more

than what is barely needed for their maintenance Their accounts will be before the public, and they will mend their ways in the light of public criticism

It surprises me when people doubt whether Vaisyas will have any incentive to invest their money in the public sector Will they participate and put in active work if all the industries are nationalised ? Will they use their initiative, their capital and ability in the public sector as they now do in their business ? These questioners believe that the leading business magnates will invest their capital only when they find their self-interest is served Our ancients had great trust in them and given them a significant place in the social structure If only they act up to the expectations they will get the place of honour that Gandhiji has won for himself

Some ask me, "Have Birlas become the trustees of their wealth as Gandhiji desired ?" I tell them that it is not our business to judge others I know this much that Birlaji has human goodness and love in him I believe that God who prompts me to talk like this will prompt them also to become compassionate While talking in this vein to a big businessman I asked him to become the trustee of his wealth, and use his talents for social good He said that it was not a difficult task for businessmen and added that while the businessman of other countries lead a life of ease and ostentation, our Vaisyas lead simple lives He told me of his millionaire friends who lead such simple lives The Vaisyas have love, business ability, and above all a simplicity When there is such a fine combination why cannot these people establish the kingdom of compassion ?

IV

We go to every land-owner and ask of him for land-gifts, but we do not go to the individual merchants The land owners are not in a position to understand the idea in a group But the businessmen understand the idea when we address them in groups We are waiting for the time when the businessmen will come forward to take up this work from our hands While we go on collecting lands they will themselve take up the programme for the development of the land received as Bhoodan If the business community takes up this mission with zeal, it will not take much

time to establish the kingdom of love in India and also in Pakistan It will also go a long way to establish peace on earth and to get over this mad reliance on armaments

We believe that if the establishment of the "Kingdom of Love" is ever to succeed, it should be possible in this land of ours When we talk of doing away with the sense of private possession people ask us whether it could happen within fifty years in this world We do not believe that the world will give up the idea of possession within fifty years, but we believe that it will happen in India, for that is the Indian tradition In ancient India people in possession of large empires gave up everything and chose the life in forests Sri Ramachandra on the very coronation day decided that he should go to the forests to keep up his father's word This is our noble tradition ! To give the idea is the work of the Brahmin and to give a concrete shape and accomplish it is the task of the Vaisya Therefore, we do not merely ask the Vaisyas for Sampatti-dan, but we want much more from them We want them to take on their own shonlders the whole work of Bhoodan

All know that without the help of business community, life will not be comfortable They transport commodities from different places and distribute them The ancients have given them a dignified place and without their co-operation society cannot progress But now-a-days they have fallen down from their high level and we come across all kinds of malpractices in trade. We have to examine wherein lies the fault There is the wick, there is the oil, yet the lamp does not burn well and give us light because of the lack of the loving hand to light it

When there are the Vaisyas with so many good characteristics why should I feel worried ? I hope that our business community will take over the remaining work of Bhoodan and will do what all needed to complete it When they come to me offering some money, I tell them that I am only the messenger of an idea and do not know the use of money They should come forward with their love, business acumen, and simplicity to take up this work of developing the land that will be distributed to the landless

Here is a rare opportunity before the business community. Mahatma Gandhi had great confidence in them His spirit is watching to see as to how those of his fellow-men are acquitting themselves The great sacrifice to do away with the idea of possession has started with Bhoodan Now is the opportunity for

the tender-hearted Vaisyas to establish the Kingdom of love on earth

VI

THE LOK-NEETI IN SAMPATTI-DAN

Vinobaji's address to the Commercial Community at Kozhikode on the 12th July is a highly philosophical exposition and the first of its kind on Sampatti-dan It is not a mere sharing of monetary wealth It is consciously directed to the fulfilment of the spiritual destiny of the individual by ultimately making the State superfluous through his compassionate service and transcending the limitations of nation and politics to embrace the whole of the world and humanity which rest on the universal law or *Lok-Neethi*

Man has two phases of life and both blend to make it a whole One is the family life, where love is the motive force for action Man throughout the world acts on account of this attachment to the family But he does not get satisfaction merely with this, and so tries to render some service to the society This is his other phase of life Even in the service of society there are two kinds one confining itself to narrow considerations of caste, religion and party, and the other universal without such limitations As the knowledge of science is widening, the field for narrow social service is shrinking The outlook of man has widened and the scope for happy human contacts has increased Now he should beware of narrow service as that is detrimental to him, and should take to serving society without petty considerations

The Two Ways of Service

The social service again is of two kinds One is that rendered through the government We entrust all the responsibility to the government and make it serve society in all ways People send their representatives to form the government and through them render service Of late this kind of service has come much into vogue But in this the power of the State is being used Though this service is appreciated, full satisfaction is not derived from this Money is needed for these services rendered by the government What does the government do ? It levies taxes, and people willing

or not have to pay them Our course the people know their government and pay the taxes But this kind of service does not give satisfaction to the people This service through government has not the purity of heart, and it is all external The taxes have been increased and I pay more now than what I used to do Does this mean that that I am doing more of social service ? It is not by sheer force that the government is collecting all its taxes from me ? There has been no change of heart in me Instead of a thousand I pay two thousand now to help the rendering of greater service, but my heart is not changed I do not mind paying taxes I do not give false income-tax returns I may be rendering more service, but my heart has not widened and mellowed This kind of social service might go on, but it will not uplift man towards his spiritual destiny Dams might be built, roads formed, factories opened ! More houses might be built and more of everything produced ! All this of course has to be done All these have been done in America and it is a land of plenty now But it is said that the Americans have no contentment Physical prosperity will not lead to upliftment of man or to the expansion of his heart We should value more the service born of compassion and love

We call the social service born of the heart *Lokaneeti* or *Janasakthi* and not *a rajaneeti* So service should be heart felt sympathetic and universal One kind of service is to family born of attachment to it This should be done Money should be earned in righteous ways, and evil means should be discarded He who serves the family so faultlessly is doing real service The other type of service is that of co-operating with the government while it renders service by paying taxes But the third kind of service is born of heart-felt human love Here people render service themselves Narrow considerations should be given up And now it is your duty to take to this kind of service today

We call this dharma The first dharma or duty is to the family We have explained its conditions, maintaining truth, earning by righteous means, and loving the neighbour All members of the family should be considered and treated alike In this way the heart of the man widens The second dharma is to the country We co-operate with the government in all its good actions and protest when it goes wrong Then the government

too will mend its ways All protests against evil should be done with love and humility

There is need for this kind of force The English government attacked Egypt, but the English people raised their voice of protest against it, and the government had to yield This is an example of duty to the country Co-operation with the government in its good activities and opposition to its evil acts is the principle of *Rashtra dharma* The third is the duty to humanity, *Manava dharma* or Bakti Thus, is the duty of man classified

The first duty to the family is born of attachment and this should expand so as to cover the whole society As narrow attachments fade the individual gets merged in the society Up to an age the attachment to the family has to continue, but with the experience and knowledge of life one should become a a *vanaprastha* The responsibilities of the house are handed over to the children and both the husband and wife begin to live like brother and sister Then they allot their time for the service of the society Likewise the duty to the country should widen itself as universal service to humanity

Limitations of States Welfare Work

Let us suppose that the government requires Rs 100 crores for social services What does it do ? It gives the various items of work for which money is needed If people themselves give so much of money voluntarily then the society is thoroughly changed The government gets the money as voluntary contributions and not as compulsory taxes How wonderful it will be ! There is the Prime Minister's Fund There is some mishap somewhere, and the people of their own accord gladly contribute to the Fund The Prime Minister has a scheme for 200 crores and the people willingly contribute it Today we are not even able to imagine such a situation We never expect the government to ask for contributions Let us suppose that lakhs of people come forward to contribute so much amount and to render service to the society, surely the authority of the government to that extent will then get diminished When the power of the government gets diminished in this way it will be a mighty achievement When people see that this love of the people accomplishes more than the power of the State, they will dance with joy Recently there was the epidemic of 'Flu' All rose up to render the necessary services Free service was rendered and the epidemic lost its virulence The

government had not much to do

Three years ago we were wandering in the State of Bihar During the floods an area of two to four hundred square miles was one vast sheet of water, and there was need for great help The government did its part but the people were silent We were greatly surprised The pople should rise up on such an occasion and plan with courage to face the situation The government is there as a secondary agent Then only will real *Janasakthi* be born and people experience real freedom Now all the social work is left to be done by government and humanitarian missions have ceased to come forward Compassion is waning and individual generosity disappearing So it is necessary that compassionate service expands and the activities of the government gradually diminish

The Three Ways of Dharma

These are the three dharmas or duties The duty to the family should get lost in the service to the society It will never break, for the son takes up responsibility the moment the father gives it up The rivers get merged in the sea, yet they continue to flow The duty to the government or the state will get transformed into universal social service When universal love dawns the duty to the nation as such does not stand When universal love pervades, society can transform itself as it should

It is our good fortune that after the attainment of Swaraj we got the ideology of Sarvodaya and the ideal of love placed is before us The government does its service with force, and the individuals are lost in their private affairs ! When love is lost life itself is lost The ideal of Sarvodaya is now before us We should act with love and a lot of work is on hand, a good plan can be drawn up Society has respected wise men and with their help planned the education of the people When it is a question of deciding a dispute four wise men sit together and decide it, and the disputants accept the verdict These wise men can plan out the health of the people, advise them and serve them There are the Ramakrishna Mission, Prema Samaj and the Servants of India Society doing these services To that extent the work of the government is reduced

Now Gramdan is going on and people are giving up their rights of private property They plan and work together To this

extent the planning of the government will not be needed People do not go out seeking justice, wise men decide cases with compassion and to that extent the work of the courts gets reduced

In former days people had much confidence in their neighbours and business-men Whenever they went on long pilgrimages they entrusted their properties to the care of these and got them back safe on their return Conditions of today are just the reverse Society cannot get on without business-men, but they are not trusted When a difference arises the dispute is placed before wise men and their verdict accepted Wherein is the need for courts ? When we had not got Swaraj we were taking up our cases to the Privy Council in England After Swaraj the Privy Council has gone and we take our cases to the Supreme Court in Delhi What will be our Swaraj if we are to carry our cases even now to England ? So the court at Calicut should also go if we are to get *gramaraj* and *atmaraj* Good people gather when complaints are laid before them and decide, and their judgments should be accepted Do we not accept what our mothers say ? Is there a court above the mother ? When people get justice this way, it will be a matter of great rejoicing

The Shanti-Sena

Suppose all the merchants of this place give their sampatti-dan, and educate chosen young men for service The young men having understood the ideology of Sarvodaya will go to villages to render service They go to the people, get mixed with them and understand their misery and happiness They get so endeared to the people that they help them in all situations The villagers welcome them, feed them and place their problems before them With their help the people themselves shape their plans of upliftment When trouble starts in Calicut the workers rush up to bring in peace there also When they succeed in their mission of peace the police will not be needed Likewise all the activities of the government will give way to the loving service of the people These are some of the items of Sarvodaya work

You have started this work by giving Sampatti-dan You gave your Sampatti dan but revert back to your work of money-making You will not give your thoughts to this You give all your mind to the affairs of your family If Baba who is a free man now begins to collect a fund he will get fettered Baba wants to preach to all and he should have good sleep So what

is yours is mine and everyone of you my banker, and my money is safe in your hands Your money will be spent according to your wishes There will be a Sarvodaya Mandal not only for Calicut but for the whole of Kerala The Mandal has tried social workers of non-party as its members, and with its advice you can spend your money But you should remember that as the river is constantly flowing, your service also should be constantly flowing

Here is an incident in Mahabharatha Dharma and Bhima were discussing something when a man came to them to decide a case for him. Bhima did not like to be interrupted and asked him to come later But Dharma was not for it, saying that justice should not be delayed According to him justice was that which was done in time—*Dharmasya thvaritha gathini Dharma's* pace is quick Today's justice will be current only for this day Likewise money also should be spent in time without delay Shyamjee says that the amount collected here is small But we do not view it that way Today it may be small, later with the widening of the heart it will grow big This is like a small fruit When people taste this they will voluntarily give more *dan* How long are we to go like this ? Our answer is that we will go on till the whole goverment disappears We will not have peace till then People ask when that will be ? We say that when *Navagrahs* (nine planets) gather together this will be accomplished

Dissolution of the State

Now you will realise that this is not a mere negative work Loving and compassionate service should so expand as to leave no room for service by government, or for its very existence People tell us that it will be mere anarchism We say we have no *isms*, but out are out for action We want to widen love and compassion, so that the State might be merged and get liquidated in it

Now Gramdans are being given People are giving up property rights and are giving help to Baba in his work This cannot be effected by law If it can, who has stood in its way all these days ? Baba can take more by his loot of love than the taxes can ever do

Government imposes taxes with great hesitation, and gets

very little If only a little is to be got this way why not get it with love and sympathy Though it is democracy that prevails, so much cannot be forced out of the people There are always the coming elections The members of the government are sent by the people, are the people's servants and still the people are terribly afraid of them But Baba loots them with love not during night but in open daylight He too has to sleep at night Baba when asked about his identity says that he is of their house A boy of five left the house, and he returns after 25 years He addresses the mother and announces his arrival The mother stares but does not identify him and says that he is not her child She thinks that modern beggars have become too daring ! He daringly enters the house As he does not give his credentials the mother does not embrace him Similarly you may not recognise Baba as such now as Baba had been separated out of the house long ago and it is not quite easy to recognise him But when we lay down our credentials before you and prove that Baba is of your own house then with open hearts all of you will give him *dans*

8

SHANTI SENA AND WORLD PEACE

VINOBA BHAVE

Perhaps there never has been such an intense hunger for peace as exists in the world today Nations, which have been deeply involved in the ways of violence are now thinking in terms of peace and co-existence It is true that Governments still increase armaments but they are perpetually thinking of ways and means of being liberated from them, and confess that no good can come out of them

Men and nations are gradually realising that their problems cannot be solved by war and violence They also realise that, a spark of fire in one house can spread and destroy the whole village, so too sparks of the fire of war can now cause the destruction of the whole world Once this fire has started men themselves will not be able to control it, for men are no longer entire masters of what they have made.

Through remarkable progress in science men have been able to produce fantastic weapons, but science recognises no partisanship Any advanced nation can take advantage of scientific progress and create more and still more destructive armaments Competition in this field is becoming more and more intense between the nations of the world, even though they talk in terms of "peaceful co-existence". They forge ahead in building up stocks of arms as if they were helpless, accepting a kind of "brink of war" policy

Nations acknowledge the power and advantage of solving mutual problems by peaceful negotiations since these cannot be

solved by war This is an immense step forward It opens a new power for man and all possible support should be given to it We hope that some will come through the formation of the Shanti Sena in India—a country which can act as a mediator

Vinobaji was asked, "What will the Shanti Sena do in the face of armed force ?" and he gave the following reply

> "The peace army will be primarily one of service, it will be a SEVA SENA (service army) and only on occasions of violence will it do the work of a Shanti Sena The Seva Sena will provide the Shati Sena with the weapons which can be used when there is an outbreak of violence Military forces carry arms, will such an army give up its weapons at the sight of a weaponless army ? Actually our Shanti Sena's weapons will be moral The power of loving service will be its main weapon People will naturally, spontaneously respond to disinterested service and because of this love, wherever there may be trouble, peace will be restored The volunteer, howover, must be ready to offer his life if the situation so demands
>
> "Consider what is happening in the world today When Britain and France attacked Egypt, the voices of many peoples, of newspapers, even of the British themselves, rose against this injustice In the end England had to retrace her stapes Why did all this have to happen ? The conscience of nations is awakening Because of this no country can now suddenly attack another Under these circumstances, wherever a service-based Peace Army is established there will be a building-up of moral strength against the forces of evil and lasting harmony will be created
>
> "What can England and India do for world peace ? Some country has to take a courageous step forward and free itself from the bondage of armaments—a step and contrary to reason Such a country should not concern itself with what other nations are doing it will have to take a unilateral action on the basis of its own strength There are two nations, India and England which are capable of taking this action if they have the courage It is within the realm of possibility, of course, that any other nation may also take such action, if, God wills It is hoped that India will be the first to free itself trom armed forces, because India's culture supports

such an action The hope in England lies in the belief in its inner strength

"Some people say that England is a second-rate power My idea is different There is no nation stronger than England—wealth and arms alone do not give strength When England took the step of releasing its hold on India, its moral strength grew I saw England's strength too in the Suez affair England's action in India was a sign of strength and in the history that is still to be written, it will be judged a glorious action of which England can be as proud as India As a result of the non-violent movement, the relationship between the people of England and India have deepened England knows what war is, and what it requires in national effort, I therefore, believe that England has the strength to liberate itself from armed forces

"What is the basis of my hope in India? Although India looks like one country, it is really a continent like Europe. That there is one Government is an amazing fact China is also old and large, but China does not contain so many divisions Only Europe can be compared to India, having so many linguistic groups, yet whereas Europe is largely divided on the basis of language, India is one unit inspite of many languages and scripts

"On account of this unity in diversity we can say that there is non-violence in India's blood Europe of course, is more advanced politically, but India's strength is such that it could disarm

"Then again, how did India fight its war of Independence? Gandhiji, who led the non-violent struggle, always said that we are friends of the British. The British kept Nehruji in jail for 7 years, but he retains no ill feelings towards them This is not limited to Nehruji, hundreds have that feelings towards England The Indian people are even proposing that the English language should be kept in India, though the national language, Hindi has been decided upon This is a sign of the spirit of non-violence, therefore, we can harbour the hope that India will disarm unilaterally.

"But why is this not happening? Our non-violent strength has not come to the surface It is there, but few have faith in it. People call it a weakness to be non-violent Why has this

happened ? England forced weapons out of India's hands, and as a result, its people gave exaggerated importance to the possession of arms If this has not happened, India would now have greater strength, because this attraction for arms would not exist However, we benefited from England's action in this forced disarmament—it gave Mahatma Gandhi the opportunity to experiment with non-violence The people realised that fighting with weapons was impossible and developed faith in the non-violent struggle Gandhiji, however, wanted the non-violence of the strong, not the weak—but the non-violence of the weak was practised and, as a consequence, we had the big post-independence Hindu-Muslim strife Gandhiji realised this "

"Now India is free After careful consideration of the conditions within the country and in the world, it chose its own way I have repeatedly advised the Government to disarm. But who is the government ? If it were Nehruji it would be easy, but it is the parliament, and with one voice it demands arms and more arms for India It is the same with America Are they short of arms ? No, Even so, Ike wants more and more arms on account of Russia We must acknowledge that India has not the inner strength to disarm, though all agree that the arms it possesses are useless when faced with atomic weapons What we have to do is to prepare a new climate in India and to this end we must first show that armed forces are not required to maintain internal peace. Even though there are problems and divisions in plenty, we have to see that there is no violence

"In preparing this new climate in India we have the assistance of the Gramdan movement and the Peace Army (SHANTI SENA) Gramdans cut at the root of all problems and divisions, for in them all things are to be done on the basis of goodwill and love Even though there are only 3,500 Gramdans up to the present, I have begun the establishment of the peace Army Why should I have done this ? The answer is, that Gramdan cannot flourish without a non-violent peace force In Tamilnad there was a disturbance and peace had to be restored by the police through the use of arms Unless we ourselves can remove this necessity, how can we ask the Government to disarm ?

"Some people think that our hope is baseless, that it is

impossible to achieve our aim My answer is, that it is a joy to try the impossible The goal we strive to reach is necessary for both India and the world, and even if there is only slight hope of success we have the right to ask the Government to reduce its arms My conviction is that though disarmament the Pakistan problem would soon be solved At present Pakistan feels that it must speak to India from a position of strength, the same applies to India when speaking to Pakistan I say that in order to speak to Pakistan with true strength we should reduce our armed forces Disarmament brings new strength—a service-based peace army will build this necessary inner strength.

"The peace of the world should not rest in the hands of a few, however great they may be In the days of despotic kings it was inevitable, but why should even under democracy power remain in the hands of a few ? If the leaders of Russia and America decide on a wrong course they can cause a world conflagration, we can only hope and have faith that they will not take the wrong course

"Democracy must be such that real authority rests in the hands of the people, and it is new perspective of the Gramdan movement along with the Shanti Sena, which gives me hope. In the Gramdan village power is decentralised When Gramdan is effective, power cannot remain in the hands of a few Villages will stand on their own feet, make their own plans, arrange for their own protection, education, etc The Peace Army will have the backing of the people and will be drawn from them. The authority of this 'peace force' will come from its service to the people, not from the authority of its name In fact, when the Peace Army has completed its work and replaced the armed forces, it will automatically cease to exist The people will live in peace, every home will have its own peace volunteers

"I am conscious that we are weak to dare tackle such a huge task, but God often uses the weak to fulfil His purposes "

A NEW POWER FOR PEACE

"Thought that has the support of both spiritual and scientific

knowledge will last What has spiritual insight to say ? That there is no place for concessions of minority and majority, that there is no place for pride of possession, for 'this house is mine', 'this field is mine All belong to the Lord and everything belongs to all This is the voice of spiritual insight It is also the voice of science speaking the same language Science poses the question of how production in agriculture can be increased. If all unitedly and with one resolve use scientific methods and give up thinking in terms of 'mine' and think in terms of 'ours', then there will be greatly increased output If only two or three nations of the world have petrol, what has the scientific age to say ? It will not recognise the exclusive ownership of these countries To make proper use of such resources the man-power and the wisdom of the whole world is necessary If one country alone profits from the possession of such resources, then it will come into conflict with other countries In Kerala there is rubber Science says that it should belong to the whole of India, because only then can it be made full use of and for this reason science will not allow private ownership to continue

"SARVODAYA, towards which its advance column—the Shanti Sena—moves, accepts both the voice of science and of the spirit, and has no place of the old conceptions of ownership, caste divisions, majority-minority, party politics distructive weapons, centralised Government, etc With it comes a NEW POWER FOR PEACE

"These are thoughts that have to be considered They may appear new, but *without them there will be no harmony or real progress in the world* The main points may be summaried as follows

1 So long as there is faith in violence there will be no progress in the world
2 Faith in party politics is no good, and whatever is done in the party spirit will not last
3 Private ownership cannot remain There must be common ownership of land and property Everyone must work co-operatively, and if there is to be fruit it must be shared by all
4 Caste and religious distinctions cannot remain

"These are the four important pillars of Sarvodaya

"Everyone wants world peace The communists are beginning to accept of non-violence So, however difficult this task of bringing in the Sarvodaya order, it must be carried through If there is friction in society the Shanti Sainik will restore harmony Wherever there is trouble he will go and stand in its midst and be ready to give up his life if necessary.

"Suppose that this idea became popular amongst young people and they all became members of the peace army, how would you test its strength ? One simple test would be that within a certain area where the peace army is operative there would be no more need of police force, no more thieves, no more resort to police courts—in fact, the Government would have to take away the provision for a court "

II

INDIA's CULTURAL BASIS

"The Rishis in the Vedas prayed thus 'May everyone in the village be healthy and strong ' They did not say . 'May my house prosper, may I be healthy and strong ' They thought in terms of the community

"In the Gayatri Mantra—which is recited individually there is a prayer to the Lord. It does not say, 'May I attain wisdom', but 'May WE attain wisdom, my WE be inspired' To prayer is for everyone

"This feeling of one community, one family, is 'dharma' The meaning of 'dharma' is 'that which enfolds everything', If there are divisions and disunity, then there is no 'dharma'. When everyone becomes united and all are as one, then only is 'dharma' present We need a community within which we can be tested Co-operation is 'dharma'—how can man live in isolation ? When we live in society, only then can the co-operative spirit be made manifest Truth and love is 'dharma'. If you live by yourselves, how can you give expression to the spirit of love ? The 'dharma' of love, all the 'dharmas' of the world, can only be practised when we live as a community.

"Today, however, it is not a question of forming a community The community of the family exists, and if this were not so, then we could be likened to the wild animals of the forest In the life of the family there is 'dharma', but in a

limited, restricted sense Only when the family is enlarged to encompass the community will there be a real test of 'dharma'

"In this age we are being brought closer together through the achievements of science However small a thing may be, many are needed to make it Consider, for instance, how much co-operation has gone into the production of a watch So, as science advances, as its effects are felt more and more on our lives, the need for co-operation, for unity, will be felt in ever greater measure A Sarvodaya Society alone will meet this need, and for the establishment of this the co-operation of all is required

"Now-a days few people, who are without attachments or partnership come forward to serve the community Nearly all service is now undertaken by Government officers or through institutions, providing little opportunity for individual expression of giving, for innividual expression of loving concern Because of this the path to the development of the character of the people is closed and few offer to take to selfless service Hinduism developed a great system to meet this situation, but recent generations have neglected it This system was that after a certain time living as a householder (grahastha), one should enter the Vanaprastha stage This stage demands a life of continual study with complete non-attachment concerning oneself and one's family, and a life of service to others If this system were still in operation, the 36 crores of people in India, before they die, would contribute some service to the community, but this system no longer exists today unfortunately People remain tied to family responsibilities and find release only with death "

III

THE CALL OF SHANTI SENA

"Of Mahatma Gandhi's many concerns, one was Shanti Sena When he presented this idea to us, we who were then weak felt that it was an impossibility and could not be put into practice But actually none of Gandhiji's ideas failed to be put into practice He used to say that there is at least one person who will put his ideas into practice—and that was himself

"Consequently Gandhiji as leader of the Peace Army gave orders, and he as the solider of peace followed these to the end He passed away in its service—a sacrifice which was laid at the feet of Mother India The primal seed that Gandiji sowed is now giving forth shoots and inspiring mankind to build up armies of peace

"The meaning of 'Shanti Sena' is quite clear However, much one tries to simplify, in the end it involves the readiness of a person to lay down his life rather then lay hands on his opponent.

"In the beginning of the Sarvodaya Movement the land problem was taken up, its solution lay in a change of heart, and Bhoodan—the gift of land became its means It is now important that violence should not raise its head, and it is to achieve this that Shanti Sena has been started There will be no place in it for differences of caste, creed or party, the volunteers who offer themselves must become acquainted with Indian and world thought, and must be given training in ways of carrying on different kinds of service We expect to have one worker to every five thousand people Within the area where they live the Shanti Sainiks will carry out continual service—they will help to relieve suffering, help the sick and distribute Sarvodoya literature. By so doing they will enter the hearts of the people and become part of their families Such service is sure to be welcomed every-where by all people, wherher they are communists socialists, Hindus, Christians or Muslims Who will not welcome the doctor ?

"A business centre such as Hubli should also be a centre for the Shanti Sena Violent disturbances and situations show their effect in the business world, therefore, a business community has the greatest need to maintain peace Business cannot be carried on without it Actually today the whole world is one business centre Hundreds of things are being sent from one country to another. This importation and exportation are likely to increase from day to day

"The Peace Volunteers will go from house to house building up relationships with the young and the old alike, creating an atmosphere of peace and a spirit of service The business communities of every city should undertake the responsibility of supporting their work They should realise that it is their duty to do so if they reconsidered their own position in society

—a position of service, a position as trustees of the wealth of society

"Man experiences love from birth to death everywhere and at every moment It can be said that man is born in love, dies in love, even so its real power has not been harnessed

"Why do we not realise the full power of love ? Because our love is self-invested—we only love those who love us This is the reason why no power is made available to us Even animals love those that love them A child loves its mother Why shouldn't it ? The mother nourishes it, cares for it, so naturally it replies with love But such 'love for love' does not build up a force of love Hate for hate, love for love, fear of fear—these are the ways of the world, this is the law of reaping what you sow But the natural law of love is to bring forth love If you place something before a mirror you see its reflecting in it The mirror does not create the picture In the same way, if we love because we are loved our love becomes reflective, but the full power of love is revealed only when we face hatred with love and love our enemies

"We are not living now on the basis of this principle The big nations fear one another and each considers the other to be wrong They are not able to meet hatred with love—they feel that this is impracticable To practice the art of meetinghatred with love forms the basis of the Gramdan movement This develops a power of love which will influence the whole world

"I want every thoughtful person to understand and accept the basic principles of the Shanti Sena If it could be shown that all problems can be solved peacefully, then India's moral strength would be greatly enhanced This will not come through merely repeating the name 'peace' It is a word which is now commonly used by those who believe in armed might There must be a broad-based programme for the Peace Army covering the whole of India There should not be a single person who does not believe in it, who does not feel that he has a place in it There is a great need for such a Peace Army in India India has no real armed strength to speak of, there can be protection and instead of being a benefit to the country it may do harm When we do get rid of the armed forces we can really speak in terms of the establishment of Independence

in the country But the armed forces will not be abolished just by talking about it First we must demonstrate that they are not necessary for the country This responsibility lies with everyone throughout India, but specially with those who are believers in SARVODAYA They must raise their voices for non-violence and the Peace Army

"It is necessary, however, for us to know the weaknesses of those who believe in non-violence One is, that they do not carry on any work in one place together Accordingly the thoughts of individuals remain unexpected and are not brought into general practice Actually the discipline of the violent should look pale before that of the non-violent

"Some people think that there is no discipline in the conception of non-violence But it would be true to say that the very meaning of non-violence is discipline In non-violence the discipline stems from within, from its own understanding of the need

"Often the so-called believers in non-violence do not understand this, and think that they should be allowed to do as they please Therefore, their strength is never brought out The strength that is readily visible in the armed forces is not so visible amongst the votaries of non-violence

"Constructive work is the very life of non-violence Just as the army uses guns, so must we use as implements the constructive work-they have the sword, we have the spade We can use our constructive energies in making these tools, and Gramdan is really the factory for such work and the place where the energy and genius for constructive work is created The Peace Army and constructive work, both combined, make a fitting plan for the development ond peace of our country It is true that we are but a small group of people, but we should not worry about that, for we have TRUTH on our side

"When there are hundreds of thousands of Gramdans, constructive energy will be created for this great task, and to achieve it love and peace must grow in the heart When this is fulfilled newspaper correspondents and writers of history will go to the village people and ask them for news, for they will be the makers of history An opportunity to make history has now presented itself "

The following is part of the speech made at the Annual Sarvodaya Sammelan held at Pandharpur on 31st May 1958

"The part that women have played in the Bhoodan movement is to me splendid They have devoted themselves entirely to the work, sacrificing all—home, service and studies They are few in number, but they have done tremendous work

"If you look at the history of the Bhoodan work, you will see how in Koraput women, carrying out their pilgrimage alone brought awakening to the people The work is known thorughtout India and its praise is sung from house to house, village to village, but she women's part in it is not known so well—its history will have to be written separately I spoke of a song by Mira Bai 'Leaving mother, father and sacrificing everything, I sowed the seed of love and watered it with tears' Many women in a similar manner have left everything behind to participate in this uplifting movement

"There was a time when it was acknowledged that the place of women was in the home Today also the home will be in their care, but when during the past twenty-five years men have brought about a state of affairs in the world of which people are despondent and tired, when after two world wars we cannot say there will not be third, should not women take the leadership into their hands ? By doing so could they not influence the work of men and world affairs by the attributes of their motherhood ? Instead of doing this, they are allowing themselves to be recruited and their help in the armed forces is being requisitioned Women think that if they have rifles in their hands they will become fearless But fearlessness has no relationship to having a rifle If fearlessness could be created through armaments, then Amrica and Russia would be completely fearless now But we know that in their hearts there is great uneasiness Both live in fear of each other

"Just now a girl has explained how she used to walk through the jungle Such girls demonstrate the bravery of the non-violent I want the Indian women to come forth and show the splendour of their inner strength Henceforth the leadership will have to be taken up by women and I want them to prepare themselves for it I was very happy to learn that Ramadeviji has taken over the Shanti Sena work in Orissa If women assume responsibility for the work of the Shanti Sena

they can bring about great changes in the country and we would not be confronted with many of the existing problems Men will not be able to bring about these changes, because they are uncertain If anything occurs to them it is only to increase the army If women would come into public work and use their unique qualities, their power of restraint and their compassion, they could effect a great transformation

"Once an American asked me what kind of Government I would like and I replied 'I want the Kingdom of Kindness' Today although there is kindness, it is at the dictates of lower instincts and, therefore, it allows cruelty to continue and ultimately to dominate

"It has been said in the Mahabharata that violence is essential for the protection of Dharma This plea has come to us from those days to the present The reason people give is that they are helpless Such helplessness is confirmed in India today in regard to planning Does India plan for herself ? No It is done by Pakistan The Government observes what Pakistan spends on its army and plans accordingly This is the reason why it is vital that planning for the village shall be carried out by the village people themselves

"In this Sammelan the number of women present is very small compard to the men Why is this so ? God has not created fewer women than men It must be admitted that the whole movement is in the hands of men, and women are given but a very small place in it It is said that on every committee there should be at least one or two women If there is to be proportionate representation there should be an equal number of women representatives, but they do not come forward, because their education is the same as that which has poisoned the minds of men In the education of women, religious instruction should be included, but now-a-days that is not done So in such a state of affairs, to whom can we look to save the world ? Lokamanya Tilak said 'If anyone has protected the Dharma in India, it has been the women' In the scriptures it is said 'To one mother is due more honour than to a thousand fathers' and in the Sruti first mother, then father and then the teacher are given precedence In such a way women have been given a high place in our culture Is there such a word as 'Mahila' for woman in any other

language ? The word "Mahila ' means greatness But latterly women came to be called 'Abala' 'Mahila' (greatness) went, and 'Abala' (weakness) came Women came to be further degarded in the minds of people and they began to be called 'bhiru' which means coward, and in the name of ornamentation they were shakled—on their arms in their noses, in their ears and around their necks !

"We say that the Shanti Sainik should be free from party affiliation, but today most men are to be found in the ranks of the various political parties Women must now take up the Shanti Sena work, and for this men must release their women from all party affiliations When Ramadevi undertook responsibility for the Shanti Sena work in Orissa, I was very happy and thought that now there will be some effective work done there In similar manner women in other States must come forward to undertake this work

"It was Gandhiji who brought out the strength in women Until then all that used to be said about women was that they should be protected But where is their security ? They must develop self-protection for that, the power to protect themselves must be strengthened within them It was not then possible, but now a non violent weapon has come into our hands and women can use this weapon better than men

"25 years ago a discussion went on as to what arrangement could be made for picketing the liquor shops Some said one thing and some another Gandhiji said that this was women's work Those present stood aghast at what he said What will women do amongst such people, in such places where absolutely unruly people go and where all sorts of evil behaviour may be seen ? But Gandhiji insisted that it was there that women should work We must send those who have the greatest moral strength to stand up to those who have fallen the lowest So women went there, they worked, and the whole of India witnessed what they could do Once Anna Sahib Karve went to Wardha and said, 'Gandhiji has performed magic The work for the upliftment of women, which after 25 years of hard work we couldn't do, and which we could not conceive of, that work Gandhiji has carried out ' But what did Gandhiji do ? It was the power of non-violence that did it As long as violence is the weapon, whatever

ideologies as developed in the world, women will be relegated to the second place, however, much they might try, they will never reach the top If women are to attain the position of leadership, then it is necessary that the means used should be non-violent so that the attributes of the 'mother' can have full scope In the times of the Buddha and Mahavir the status of women improved and by virtue of Gandhiji's life and work they made much progress, and all this was because they recognised the power of non-violence

"My hope and expectation is that the women of India will take up the work of Shanti Sena and in support of this introduce the Sarvodaya Patra in every home and in them the children will place a handful of grain daily If they do so it will be a great achievement I am happy that after the death of Gopa Bapu the workers in Orissa have agreed to take the Sarvodaya Patra to every home as a memorial to him This idea must take hold all over the country Our revered President, Dr Rajendra Prasad, has accepted the Patra in his home If people were more sensitive in India, at the news of this, a keen interest would have been aroused for placing the Patra in every home The President is not an individual, he is the symbol of devotion for the whole country When his home has a Patra it is an indication that everyone should do so But the cloud of ignorance is so dense that it is almost impenetrable

In 1951 on my way from Wardha to Delhi, I stayed in a village in Vindhya Pradesh, and when the name of Gandhiji was mentioned, people asked where he was It fell upon me to tell them that Gandhiji had died four years earlier In this country we have on the one hand immense ignorance, and on the other we have newspapers reporting such trifling incidents as that of a Minister having opened a dal factory and of his having used Gandhiji's name What he said there is printed in bold letters, but the knowledge that the villagers should receive does not reach them

IV

THE SERVICE ASPECT OF THE PEACE ARMY

"During the illness that I have gone through, the thought

which occupied my mind most was that of the establishment of a huge Peace Army This will be such an army that will bring within it people who will move continually in the service of others, who will bring great moral strength to all, and who will never allow violence to raise its head

"The daily programme of a volunteer in the Peace Army will be one of serving others He will be available all the 24 hours and render help when needed Therefore, throughout the year, this army will be a 'Seva Sena'—an army of service volunteers, and only on special occasions when there is an outbreak of violence or disturbance, will it be the 'Shanti Sena'—an army of peace volunteers

"A group of Bombay workers came to meet me and they said that they wanted to serve Bombay area by area We discussed this and came to the conclusion that at least one thousand workers would be necessary in a large city where there is a population of more than 3 millions Working on this basis, each worker will have to be at the service of 3000 people, and be in contact with each of them Thus, by his efforts to introduce the ideas of peace and co-operation, a powerful moral influence on society will be created which will help to maintain peace There should be at least 200 workers—Seva Sainiks, per district For a city like Bangalore, there should be, at least, 200 volunteers

"We must explain to the volunteers of this army that the present system of Government should be done away with, that so long as this system lasts, there will be no lasting peace in our society The peace volunteers, therefore, must be absolutely non-partisan, non-attached and selfless Their main task will be the eradication of all causes of violence—enmity, cruelty, the attitude of master-servant, high caste and low caste, and religious conflicts Some reasons for violence are political, some economic, some social, others religious Today, however, party politics has become a foremost cause of antagonism The peace volunteers will try to root out these causes, try and solve all differences and problems peacefully, and in so doing will be working towards the goal of the Shanti Sena—the building up of a non-violent society

"The peace volunteers, moreover, will be at the service of all,

poor and rich They will place the needs of the poor before the rich, and so gain sympathy and help from them This will serve the important purpose of reducing the wide gap between the rich and the poor The volunteers will work towards the abolition of ownership of land, will try to increase the production of the village, will make plans for education and care of the sick Through all this they will receive the goodwill of the people, there will be a moral upliftment in the country, and the influence for peace will be felt far and wide

"As Gramdan is being accepted now to some extent, we must think carefully of the ways of protecting it The people of each village must be taught to live as a united community, each considering another s welfare as his own The land of every Gramdan must be shared, schools must be well organised for all, interchange of goods between villages must be regulated, a co-operative shop must be started, all these tasks must be carried out in order that Gramraj may be established For the stability and security of the Gramdan villages a "Shanti Sena is essential

"Merely talking of peace and security will have no effect We must create an atmosphere for it We must show that there is no need for armed forces to maintain the internal security of the country There are indeed many problems in India and sectional conflicts arising from serious differences But it will have to be shown that these need not lead to a breach of peace I cannot think of anything better for this than the Peace Army On the one hand there is Gramdan which cuts at the root of the problems, and on the other the Peace Army which will maintain peace and remove the causes of the outbreak of violence The ultimate objective of both being identical, both will carry out their task in a spirit of love

"The limitations of ordinary schools where pupils and teachers are largely restricted to class work are not to be found in basic schools where the object is to encourage the children to have an enlightened interest in their environment. Those in basic schools try to participate in the lives of those amongst whom they live. and it will be natural for them to receive such a training which will fit them to serve in the Shanti-Seva Sena later in life

"The teachers of Basic Schools along with other constructive

workers engaged in Khadi, village industries and other Gandhian work, will doubtless from the front battalion of the peace army It is up to them to familiarise themselves with its fundamental principles and put them into practice

"The world was given a great philosophy by Karl Marx Through it the downtrodden and the poor began to rise up, and realise that they could break their chains of bondage But Marx's philosophy also gave birth to an erroneous idea that the capitalists were separate from society and worked against its welfare These two conflicting attitudes gave rise to violence

"In reality, every child whether born of a capitalist or a poor man, is nourished with its mother's milk, by her love and tender care This involves no question of social position But as these same children grow up, they are drawn into conflicting groups, and grades of high and low gain importance

"Since we ourselves have made and stressed such conflicts, cannot we destroy them and build up unity ?

"Today people are filled with fear What is the way to overcome this fear ? The answer is Gramdan And what else ? Shanti Sena

"In certain large cities there have been violent disturbances—the result of strife between labour and management To counteract this, in the society which we are striving to build, one aspect will be that of 'factory dan'—an idea similar to that of Gramdan for villages The factories should belong to those engaged in them, both owners and labourers should take the responsibility for running them, and an atmosphere of love should pervade there Without the establishment of these ideas of Gramdan and Factory dan, peace cannot be maintained in either village or city

"In this new society, personal benefit and the good of everyone will be synonymous, which means that differences between the so-called private and public sectors will be removed In the present state of society, the position and status of the private sector has fallen, but both private and public sectors are equally important, and are complementary It is not a question of one sector being increased at the expense of the other, both should contribute 100 per cent to society This

can be symbolised by the co-ordination and inter-dependence of our hands and fingers What our fingers do, our hands do, and *vice versa* Our fingers represent the public sector, our hands the private This forms the basis of the conception of our new society and will form the foundation for a non-violent attitude

"Five or six centuries ago many great and saintly people were born who exerted great influence on the lives of the people of India But these influences were transient and lasted only through a few centuries Today it is the Government which has gained great influence on the mass of the people In every sphere of life, in every activity, the Government forms the central authority

"Take, for instance, the fields of literature, education and science People themselves want that writers and poets be awarded prizes by the Government If one eminent author should be asked to recognise and appreciate the writing of another, it would be reasonable, but why ask the Government? The same holds good in education A Government which consists of people who are not experts either in the sphere of education or of literature, is asked to take the initiative and organise the educational programme in detail Similarly the talents of scientists are directed according to the policies and wishes of existing Governments

"It is right that government should help in the movements of Bhoodan and Gramdan, in the improvement of agriculture, etc But even this work must not become entirely dependant on it Consider the position of the villages received as Gramdan today Constructive work must be begun there immediately Workers cannot and must not depend on the Government to begin it I say this because there is a growing feeling today that all reconstruction work is the responsibility of the Government, and that constructive workers cannot carry on without the support of some political party This idea must be eradicated if our work is to progress From experience, we see that those who have given Gramdan have great faith We have gone to them, explained our ideas and they have made their decision It is not the hand of the Government that has been effective, but the working of individual, spiritual power"

V

THE VOLUNTEER OF THE PEACE ARMY

"Shanti Sena will carry on its work by a complete distribution of responsibility India will be divided into 70,000 sections, in each of which one person will work freely amongst the people We have no set blue-print to offer to direct the activities of the workers Each volunteer will be fully responsible for his work of service in the community and for putting his principles into practice Only when he is completely free will he be able to meet every situation as it arises If another at a central place, is responsible for directing the work, the Shanti Sainik (the volunteer of the peace army) will have to refer to him for everything, and he not having lived in the community concerned will not be able to answer correctly The worker's test will consist of the extent to which he can discipline his thought He will serve the people according to his own insight, become known to all, share in their joys and sorrows, and would not care for his own The sufferings of the people will be his own

"This is not the case in the armed forces in which groups are formed, given special training, and are regimented in thought No ideas from outside are allowed to infiltrate lest there arise conflicts in ideology But in the Shanti Sena programme there is full freedom of circulation for all ideas, for it is the duty of the volunteer to give deep, open-minded consideration to all. He is free to accept or reject any But if he is not familiar with some, it will be considered an 'unforgivable mistake' It is not that he should have full knowledge of all the affairs of the world, but that he at least should be aware of them

"Turning to the actual 'organisation' of the Shanti Sena, should the workers in one area need the help of those from another, then the most suitable help must be sent at once, and they should understand that they must do what they who have called them require There must be an agency in existence which will send this help Whether this will be an individual or a group, and which will claim the greater trust, are questions which the people have to decide depending on whether they have more faith in the dicision of a community or a reliable individual If a decision is made by the

community, there will be more enthusiasm The idea is always more important than the individual.

"When an agency is established to decide how many people should be sent to such and such a place, then, upon receipt of a call for aid, those volunteers must leave their work and go It is assumed that each volunteer is prepared for this when he signs the pledge It may involve a man's leaving his family, which is a big sacrifice, but as his heart and mind are filled with the Sarvodaya ideal, he will accept this sacrifice with love

"Nations which are considered to be the most powerful today, are in reality, filled with fear, and on account of this they talk much of armaments But Gandhiji taught us to fight without arms He gave the country courage to say to the British 'Quit India' even though we had no armed forces

"There have been two global wars since men have borne arms, and another would be disastrous As an answer to this, the idea of a Peace Army has been brought forward What will its weapons be ? They will be love, service and compassion.

"The most important characteristic of a volunteer in the Peace Army is compassion This quality is never ineffective, it always proves powerful It prompts the volunteer to develop a certain attitude of mind which will make his work sacred—something to be done with the whole heart and mind. Compassion will make him independent of others, it will quickly seek out its own way of expression It will not recognise any barriers and it will keep the initiative in its own hands, going out spontaneously to serve people in need

"Are there no feelings of compassion amongst the people today ? Yes, there are, but they are not expressed There is not that spontaneous inspiration to go forward and lessen the sufferings of our fellow beings The qualities of compassion that we have in us are dormant today These must be roused and made effective If we do so we will be able to do great things We will be able to become truly friendly with all nations, including Pakistan It will be the work of Shanti Sena to awaken the feelings of peace and and goodwill towards every one, but the chief attribute of each volunteer is compassion

"The great Himalayas stand vast and firm in the North. The

Ganga flows down from their heights to the villages on the plains It flows past the villages murmuring, 'Come, make the best use of me ' Those who have compassion in their hearts are like the river The river quenches the thirst of both tiger and deer, it recognises no distinctions of caste, creed, religion or party So too the volunteer will put himself at the service of every one, whether he is considered good or bad By doing this, he will achieve his goal of bringing peace to the hearts of men

"A volunteer's other main characteristic will be his readiness to build up equal relationship with every one, and his humility, pure and transparent One can compare his qualities to the water's It adjusts itself to its channels, meets a stone which it gradually moulds by its current The gentleness and softness of water brings this about It is such attributes in the volunteer that will eradicate causes of strife in society "

VI

MAINTENANCE OF SHANTI SENA

"When a group of volunteers for peace (Shanti Sena) is formed, it will be necessary to receive help for its maintenance Who will give this help ? Those families and individuals whom the volunteers serve will maintain them As soon as the idea of the service—peace army is understood, people will come forward to offer help of their own accord They will surely give Sampatti-dan willingly and happily.

"Apart from Sampatti-dan, which will naturally be the contribution only of the head of family, we would like a token of assent from every single one of its members For this we suggest that for five in a household one hank of handspun yarn per month be given These hanks will form part of the maintenance of the volunteers and will be a token of asset to work We, therefore, call it 'SAMMATIDAN', meaning 'consent giving'

"Another facet of SAMMATIDAN is the SARVODYA PATRA The youngest in the home gives a handful of grain for the maintenance of the workers This will create early in the child's mind the importance of giving

"There should not be a single household without this arrangement But it will be brought about not by compulsion but by love If your neighbour has not accepted a Patra, what will you do? Go to him and say 'In any my home I have a Sarvodaya Patra and I am going to put a handful of grain in it in your name.' That is enough You will have won

"Through the support thus given to the Shanti Sena and through the steady work of the volunteers, the strength of the people will grow, and we can be sure of the building up of the non-violent society and of upholding it"

CONCLUSION

The question remains—what sort of picture has been conveyed to the reader by the foregoing pages? It will have become obvious that the presentation of the 'Shanti Sena' involves comment on all aspects of the Sarvodaya movement and its implications in regard to world peace, the economic and social order, to politics and to the responsibilities for building a non-violent society The high expectations held of the volunteer of the Peace Army will have struck the reader, but they are not unfamiliar expectations in the setting of India's culture and tradition But who can respond now to this call for complete self-giving? Whereas the countries of the West make claims for millions of men for their armed forces, Vinobaji is asking for seventy thousand men and women only

There will be many, however, who do not feel that they can give up their present employment and responsibilities, but who nevertheless are in full sympathy with the purposes of the Shanti Sena and are prepared to devote some time to pursuing its objectives The co-operation of the such people will be very welcome They will be called Sahayak Sainiks and a programme of training will be arranged for them, they will work in their own areas, serve those in need and create an atmosphere of peace and goodwill In time of special emergency they will be asked to leave their work and homes to help restore peace and harmony in the area of serious disturbance But the effective work of Shanti Sainiks and Sahayak Sainiks in normal times throughout the country will prevent that special emergency

It is expected of Sahayak Sainiks that they will register their names at the places mentioned above, mentioning the area of work which they have taken up

It will have been noticed that women have been given a special responsibility They have to take up the Sarvodaya Patra Through this not only is the support of the volunteers guaranteed, but the spirit of Shanti Sena enters every home Every women will uphold the principles of Sarvodaya and work for a peaceful, harmonious atmosphere in her neighbourhood

The call—Jai Jagat—which Vinobaji has now made extends the scope of the Shanti Sena far beyond the borders of India Units should now be formed all over the world wherever there is the determination to build up a non-violent society and a readiness to uphold it non-violently The Sarvodaya International Centre at Bangalore might well be the centre through which contract can be kept with units in all countries The units will, of course, be independent, but it will be useful to exchange information and experience Each country will work out its own basis for the Peace Army—the extent to which it will be made up of full-time volunteers and part-time volunteers The basis for its support, the character of the training, etc will probably change from country to country But the fundamental basis which Vinobaji has shown us will no doubt be accepted.

It will be rewarding if there is not only an emergence of a new urge for joining the Shanti Sena in India, but also a beginning of units in other countries in the world

9

COMMUNISTS AND GRAMDAN

VINOBA BHAVE

(Vinobaji answers here some questions posed by some villagers)

COMMUNISTS AND GRAMDAN

I have many friends in the Communist camp and they have told me that there can be no better way than Gramdan for India, Because, they admit, there is the possibility of a reaction to communist revolution, but there is no such danger in the case of revolution wrought through Gramdan

Namboodiripad, one of the front-rank Communists, had told me personally and also proclaimed publicly at the All India Gramdan Conference at Yelwal (Mysore) that he very much appreciates the Gramdan ideal When I was in Kerala for four months or so the communists were co-operating with me The communists in Kerala had argued that according to Communism the State would first gain power and then revolution would follow, but they could not say when the State power would be handed over to the people It means they are living in a dream-world. But what we are doing in the villages is more practical

HOW TO PROPAGATE LITERATURE

Christians have an unique way of communicating their ideas They sell and even distribute free their literature among the people with the firm faith that such literature is bound to attract the eyes and hearts of people You must have that faith and if your literature too is brought out in such attractive ways they

will definitely appeal to people, however, much they might have closed their minds or have been brainwashed before

Dataramji of Calcutta has adopted another technique He does not sell the literature all at once First he gives people a few books to read and again meet them after a week Most of them will buy the books as they are so cheap, attractive and good Even if some people might return them, Dataramji won't worry but will offer them other books He will note down their names and addresses and will feel sure that some day some book will certainly be acceptable to them

Our workers should not approach the people with the presumption that their minds and hearts are a closed book On the country, they should be confident that every heart and mind will surely respond Even if the door seems to be shut there might be a tiny opening somewhere It is upto the workers to spot it out and try to enter through it In this matter let them take a lesson from the sun

What does the sun do ? Whenever he finds a door shut he looks out for a small crack or hole and enters through it a little He does not get disappointed at the sight of the closed door, nor does he go away But he waits, and the moment the door opens, he will enter in all his brilliance

If the sun with all his extraordinary powers could be so humble, how much humbler should we, orlinary mortals, be !

THE CONTENT OF GRAMDAN

Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram means Gramdan Truth is that which we need most today Truth means the reality of the situation which one cannot neglect The poverty of India is the greatest truth Gramdan implies adherence to Truth Secondly, in Gramdan the appeal for donation is made through loving persuasion whereas in Communism the demand is accompanied by the chopping of heads Gramdan is therefore, Shivam—that which brings happiness and welfare Thirdly, the village will acquire a beautiful look when it goes the Gramdan way Every one will have land to cultivate, the village will be clean and the community will be like a well-knit family This is Beauty So, in a nutshell, *Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram* means Gramdan

Gramdan does not mean only community ownership and distribution of land to the landless, but much more than that To

drive out untruth from every home, to establish love, to end all ugliness in the village and to build a life of Beauty is also Gramdan If rural life becomes all-beautiful, then the people of the cities and towns will follow the villagers Today it is just the opposite, villagers following the city people

SPECKS OF VIOLENCE

It has to be admitted that the forces of violence are gaining upperhand at the present time But this is no great problem for non-violence

Suppose a person is dressed in spotless white Khadi If a drop of ink or some other little stain falls on his clothes, it immediately catches the eye But if the clothes be black even three or more stains will go unnoticed In the same way, non-violence being the true nature of human beings, even a slight departure from it attracts attention and, though small, appears in a magnified form It immediately catches headlines in the press

To illustrate further, suppose there is a mother here and she lovingly cares her child Her love is never reported in the press, because it is natural for every mother to love her baby If, on the other hand, there is a murder case it at once finds a place in the newspapers

To love is an inherent characteristic of human nature Millions of mothers love their children, brothers and sisters love one another, the rich help the poor with donations. All these are perpetual events and therefore, are not published in the press Goodness, too, is an integral part of human character and is, therefore, not published But if anything happens contrary to the natural law it creates sensation and excitement, as illustrated by the example of a solitary murder case among otherwise peace-loving people of Ramanujganj Thus, though violence appears to be having its hey-day, in reality, it is non-violence that pervades our life

Gramdan is a non-violent method True that the progress is slow But it is natural All good work is not spectacular in the beginning For instance, it took some time even for our Khadi workers to realize the importance of Gramdan for the survival of Khadi itself Now Khadi workers in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Tamilnad have taken up Gramdan work If all could understand the implication of Gramdan and work for it, it won't take much time.

10

PLANNING FOR VILLAGE SWARAJ

VINOBA BHAVE

While I was doing yatra in Tamilnad, getting a good number of Gramdans, the Union Minister for Community Development came to visit a few Gramdan villages and was much impressed When he met me, he confessed

> ' We talk of Community Projects. But in the village where there is no community, how can there be a project ? After I saw the Gramdan villages, I knew that the community had come into being and the Community Project can now be introduced there."

C D PROJECTS AND THE POOR

His remarks merited careful consideration He also said "For many years past, we have been trying to give succour and sustenance to the poor, but our help does not reach them It reaches those who knew how to make powerful pulls on the strings of help" In the circumstances, Community Project and National extension service benefit only the upper strata of rural society and cannot penetrate down below to the poor man in real need of help

Take for instance, road-building What happens when a road is built ? Even the British built roads and said they wanted to help the villages by finding them good markets for their raw materials But what they really meant was to transport the raw materials

from the villages to the towns and cities and to England Roads were indispensable for efficient transport and so they were built By building roads, therefore, the government could better exploit the villages, though in their language they were "helping" the villagers The villages were to remain the perennial source of raw materials to be turned-into finished products in the cities to fetch good profit Where there is no compassion for the poor, whatever help is rendered from above and in whatever measure, remains confined to the upper layers only

CHANNEL THAT SUCKS UP ALL

For some years, I was a farmer At Paunar, where I did farming I sank a well and used to draw water to irrigate the field There was a water channel from the well to the field But water did not reach the field even if fifty bucketfuls were poured into the channel After hundred buckets the water would just begin to reach I was a self-styled farmer and did not take help from a peasant So, after some days, I discovered that the field was at a level higher than the channel which retained the better part of the water This is equally true of government help The channel through which help flows does not reach its destination, which is not at the same level as the channel The channel itself sucks up all the help

I do not belong to any party and have no interest in condemning the Government Rather I consider it as a part of my being. Here I am making only a statement of facts The present situation is due to the reason that the Government is not interested in the villages it wants to serve, the villages are not interested in improving their lot and the uplift of the poor does not get the precedence it should If one has an ache, all thought turn to it Its cure becomes the first task *National extension Service and allied schemes are busy garlanding the body while the aching part goes unattended*

DISTRIBUTION ALONG WITH PRODUCTION

Government is exhorting people to step up production, but gives no importance to the question of proper distribution Of late, however, they have begun talking about equitable distribution and socialism It is clear, that, unless these are implemented speedily,

people will not rest content Pandit Nehru was saying, and I have been saying for the 18 long years, that mere increase in producrion is of little consequence unless its proper distribution is ensured simultaneously

The poor must get the succour and sustenance to live But the intellectuals argue, it will only mean distribution of poverty The first concern according to them, is the increase of production first, distribution comes second Distribution here and now is not possible because socialism is not distribution of poverty, but of wealth. Wealth can be distributed only when it is produced, so runs their argument

The argument is erroneous If there are five members in a family and the food is just enough for four, what is generally done? Is the food shared equally by five, each taking a little less than his fill, or do the four of them gobble it up among themselves, starving the fifth and then all begin to increase production to feed him? The answer is obvious What is duty in a family is also duty for the country as a whole Production and distribution should go hand in hand Production first and distribution second, is a wrong approach

THE FUNCTION OF VILLAGE SABHAS

The objective of Panchayati Raj is good, but what is the actual form it has been given In Orissa, there are Panchayats of five or even ten thousand people The average population of a village being 200 it means a Panchayat of 5,000 people comprises about 15 to 20 villages, extending over five to seven miles What can such a big Panchayat do and how? Representatives are elected from every village And who gets elected? Obviously, those who have money or landed property or some influence with the Government How far will they represent the village people? There is a meeting every month or 12 meetings in a year Bickerings, clash of interest, pulls and counter-pulls will vitiate the meetings Is that the way of Gram Swaraj?

ESCHEW POWER AND PARTY POLITICS

Another point—about the political parties Their entrance into the Panchayat will spell its doom If anyone wanted to spoil his work, he should let the parties in, and the rest will follow. The

parties are good at undoing everything, Caste sentiments play a big role in the elections and when the parties come and fan these feelings, all good work come to an end It is a madness to grab power, a madness which is sapping the strength of the country Power and strength are not the same thing, but are quite opposite in nature The former destroys the latter

LET THE VILLAGE PLAN FOR ITSELF

What is the way out ? The plan for village development should be made by the villagers at village level and the Grama Sabha, comprising a member from each family, should be inspired by love and compassion for all The Gram Sabha will distribute land among the landless and infuse the co-operative spirit of work There will be no scope for electioneering in the Panchayat, just as there is no question of holding elections in a family

The Gram Sabha should devote itself entirely to the allround development of the village and its decisions should be unanimous In small matters, a decision may be taken by 80 or 90 per cent majority, but on all important issues, the decision must be unanimous. Each family will contribute a part of its produce to the Gram Sabha This will be the Gram Sabha's capital to be spent for development work State help will be channelised through the Gram Sabha, thus assuring its fullest and best utilisation This is Sarvodaya planning, the central theme of which is love and compassion

Today, the Panchayat does not enjoy full power and cannot manage the affairs of the village, since it has no living contact with the individual families In our scheme of things, the villagers will energise themselves to bring about a thorough change in their conditions The individuals as well as the village will have full freedom The team spirit will grow The village as a whole will be responsible for providing employment to the poor Every Gramdani village will be a self-contained unit Ten, twenty or fifty such villages will for a Panchayat, the Gram Sabha remaining in sole charge of its on village Assam has set an example in this direction The Gramdan Act passed there, provides that the Gram Sabha of a village having a population of 100 or above will enjoy all the powers of a Panchayat There will be a district Panchayat, but the constituent villages will have direct contact with the government and the development plan of a village will be drawn up by the villagers themselves.

11

FREEDOM OF INDIA IS IN PERIL : DELAY IN GRAMDAN WOULD BE FATAL

VINOBA BHAVE

There are many 'isms' in vogue in the world today, viz, Communism, Socialism, Welfarism, Fascism, etc But in reality there is only one 'ism' which I may call as 'they-ism', meaning 'they will do it for us' The common feeling of the people throughout the globe is that they themselves cannot bring about their prosperity and progress and that some other persons having the power to do so would do it, viz , Wilson and his ministry, Nixon and his cabinet, Mao and his team In other words, we cannot raise ourselves, somebody else would do it This is 'they-ism' I want the people to get rid of this complex and set up their own assembly is the village, invest all ownership of land with the community, work by unanimous consent, do village planning themselves and run their industries, etc , and do everything by their own strength, irrespective of any aid from outside This is *Loka-Rajya* (or People's Government) which is met with neither in India nor in China, nor in U K , nor in U S A , nor in U S S R , nor anywhere else

INEFFECTIVENESS OF POLITICS

You are anxious to have your own state of Jharkhand, comprising parts of Southern Bihar, Eastern Madhya Pradesh and north-western Orissa Well I have nothing to say against it You may have it by all means But how will it help the impoverished masses ? I believe that political power can no more

deliver goods in India I know the no politician will agree with me But I am firmly convinced that the past two decades have established the ineffectiveness of party-politics The people here have been trying their fortune with one party or another and have found all of them wanting

They hold that their representatives will do everything for them They will build schools, encourage literature, carry on commerce and industry, etc And what shall the people do ? They will helplessly produce children, because the representatives cannot do it for them If they could do it, the people themselves would sit in idle comfort and easily father the children produced by the respresentatives I cannot imagine greater slavery, serfdom or inhumanity Our plight today is worse than that of wild animals We have reduced ourselves to sheep and goats

PANDIT NEHRU'S ANXIETY

Once Pandit Nehru asked me why the people did not show any enthusiasm in the planning done by the Government I told him, 'people are not bullocks The farmer never consults the bullock about his farming He decide himself to sow the seed, say wheat, and bids the bullock plough the field The bullock, on its part, has only one demand 'Feed me well so that I may keep fit and happy Don't ask me my opinion' Likewise, you, of Delhi, regard yourself as the farmer and the village people as bullock. You cannot have people's co-operation as long as you plan for them in Delhi Besides, you plan on the basis of books from U K Germany, U S A., U S S R , etc You study the developments there and frame models for the villages here This is why that our people take no interest and you find no enthusiasim in them '

With the failure of politics established, which power will serve the purpose ? The answer is—bloody revolt or non-violent revolution If bloody revolution could have succeeded in India I would have blessed it in preference to the present situation But bringing about some disorder in the name of a bloody revolution and inviting some foreign power is sheer folly I have been to Naxalbari. I had a frank talk with friends there I told them, 'How stupid you are ! You went to enact a revolution with bows and arrows, whereas you and I have conferred power in the hands of the Military and of atomic weapons In this situation, if you

proceed to launch a violent revolution you can bring about some disturbances and Pakistan will invade from one side and China from the other and you will not be able to achieve anything You will thus realise that there is no way except non-violent revolution '

HOW TO GET BACK YOUR LAND ?

Many of you are Christians and Christ taught the way of non-violence I need not, therefore, explain much to you on this subject What you should do is to build up power in every village Todav the village is like a broken piece There is no unity there and hence no strength Some of you say that you will join Gramdan only after you get back the land usurped from your hands I ask you—where has it gone ? Has it been despatched to Patna or Delhi ? It is there at its own place but the owners live else-where In Gramdan, ownership would belong to all and those people also would have to join it If they refuse they will be isolated Then who will plough their fields ? The labourers will say with one voice, 'we will work according to Gram-Sabha's behest and not at any individual's bidding' The non-resident owners will then have to approach the Gram-Sabha which in its turn, will speak out clearly, 'we shall doubtless get your land ploughed But only a part of the yield will go to you and the rest will remain with the village You cannot take away the whole of it as you have been doing' My dear brethren, this is the way to win back the land you have lost For that the village must turn itself into a single unit and generate its strength

THESE FUTILE DISTURBANCES

Some people want me to proceed slowly They ask me why I am to anxious for Gramdan The first reason is that I find India's very existence in danger There is rift all over the country Is the name of province, caste, language, religion, party, there are divisions and dissensions Relationships between various sections of the population, between the employer and the employee, the teacher and the taught, the owner and the labourer, etc , are not happy and people are dissatisfied This is why you find Naxalbari uprisings 'Gheraos' and strikes, etc In this background, foreign invasion is an easy possibility and independence is in jeopardy If

we lose our liberty, Jharkhand will disappear and so will India-Khand too

People come to me and blame me for not blessing their revolts or rebellions I tell them that my blessings would be with you if you are crowned wite success But you do not succeed anywhere. If you have such riots in Ranchi as will kill two lakhs out of its four lakh inhabitants, this will help distribution of land and property among two lakhs. Recently there were Shia-Sunni riots in Lucknow The latest news is of communal riots in Ireland Well take it from me that these sporadic outbursts will not be of say avail If there is a mighty domestic war in Bihar finishing of two and a half crores out of its five crore people and in India no less than twenty-five crores out of fifty crores, this will be welcomed by the Planning Commission which will be able to provide twice as much land, housing and other resources to the people But what these riot-loving people do is that they kill only half a dozen or so Is it, I ask you, revolution ? What else do they do ? They destroy the property and kill people so that the problem might be solved to some extent But they do just the opposite In Andhra they destroyed property worth about hundred crores of rupees You can well imagine the consequences of this loss in a poor country like India

THE DANGER OF FOREIGN INVASION

My dear brethren, there is another reason also why I am so anxious for Gramdan I can clearly visualise foreign invasion and can spot out the place of attack It is in the north-eastern corner of the country—India's bottle-neck, with Pakistan on one side, Nepal and China on the order and Assam on the third At that point, China will attack from above, Pakistan from below and inner revolt will follow in Bengal and thus Assam will be cut off. Consequently, the upper portion of the Brahmaputra will be annexed by China and the lower one by Pakistan All this is unwritten, but it is crystal clear before my eyes I tell you that there is a great likelihood of attack from without and India's freedom is in peril This is why I am in so much hurry about Gramdan and want you to accomplish this non-violent revolution without any delay.

12

GANDHIJI'S UNIQUE WAY OF LIFE

VINOBA BHAVE

HIS POWERFUL IMPACT

Those who regard 'Gandhism' as an 'ism' have not correctly understood his way Gandhiji was a person who could look at life with the widest possible dimension He can be classed with the '*Smritikars*' (authors of the Smriti scriptures) Some people have compared him with Jesus Christ, and some others with Tilak To my mind Gandhiji is more akin to the Smritikars or Manu and Yajnavalkya, whose thought force stirred all aspects of our life Such was the impact of the Gandhian way on our life. The spirit indwells and sparks only from within and, therefore, cannot be comparable to anything else

Gandhiji's command over social ethics was very comprehensive Nevertheless he was different from Manu in that, while Manu was primarily a thinker, Gandhiji was primarily an activist pinpointing service to the people Whenever life was concerned his approach was vastly profound Gandhiji's influence was both direct and indirect He himself was greatly inspired by what we call culture What, however, characterized Gandhiji's life was that he was greater than his books

True, Gandhiji's works were highly thought-provoking But the life he lived was more nourishing and more enlightening. He possessed a limited flair for academic expression His life's expression was unique So I said, if he was great as a thoughtful writer he was much greater as a living personality

With the achievement of Independence the programme of the construction evolved by Gandhiji assumed greater significance The execution of this sacred programme should be considered a great duty by the Government I look upon this programme as a governmental responsibility

LIVING PERSONALITY

Gandhiji said and did many things, all of which should be studied in the proper perspective Instead of a bookish adherence to his words we should discover the spirit that inform them A living personality as he was, Gandhiji confronted every new challenge in his characteristic way He was not as old book that could be reprinted again and again.

Gandhi was made of flesh and blood, and, therefore, while he possessed numerous qualities, he was not free from imperfections We should try to understand him and evaluate his activities, accordingly We should accept his greatness, his outstanding qualities and reject whatever inadequacies were in his life.

To me Gandhi was not a mere verson, but an ideal of life Everyday he learnt something new, looked from a newer angle and thought afresh What Gandhiji would decide upon and do today, were he living, is beyond anybody's presumption

Should we merely preserve his statue and mechanically adhere to his 'message", Gandhiji would become lifeless and 'out of date' Were Karl Marx alive today he would most certainly revise his *Das Kapital* In the natural course of history Marx's thesis has become out-of-date today Marx could not foresee during his life-lime the spectacular changes in science and technology that followed. He was undoubtedly a thinker, and hence he would, I am sure, readily accept this transformation in life and revise his conclusions

By God's infinite compassion I could find a place at Gandiji's feet Although I am in the habit of uttering his name at every breath my heart and my life were rooted and still are devoted to his heart and his life I am trying to follow him in my humble way. I always feel Bapu is before me, behind me and all around me.

13

AN APPEAL TO THE CHRISTIANS

VINOBA BHAVE

I have not come here to give any speech but to seek your blessings, and if you choose to offer, your co-operation as well During my fourteen years of *pada vatra* across the country, I must have given about fourteen thousand speeches and besides, many talks too while walking I called it a 'walking seminar'! Thus, I tried to propagate the Sarvodaya ideology by words as much as possible Now that I have lost the power to march on foot (it is there in the heart still) I use motor-car or any other vehicle

In the course of my padayatra, I have had the good fortune to meet the brethren of the Christian faith at several places They offered me not only a hearty welcome but also affectionate blessings As you know there are four main churches in Kerala They all issued a joint communique and gave me their 'support'. And the words in which they did so are unforgettable They had stated in their appeal that Vinoba's action was on the lines of Jesus and that he was trying to follow the path shown by Jesus. They called upon all Christians to support this movement in tune with the Christian spirit Later when I was in Assam I met the Christian community and they also promised their co-operation

TEACHINGS OF JESUS

To my mind, the teachings of Jesus can be summarised in his three sentences

(i) Love thy neighbour as thyself,

(ii) Love thine enemy, and
(iii) Ye love one another as I loved you

The first of these sayings is very remarkable Had Jesus called upon us merely to 'Love thy neighbour', it would have been just a common-place If you love your neighbour he would also love you, if you rebuke him he would also rebuke you All this is pure self-interest You may call it self-interest of high order, but it is self-interest all the same Christ did not confine himself to "Love thy neighbour', but added, 'as thyself' This is both very difficult and far-reaching Our love towards the neighbour must be same as towards our own self

This at once takes me to Vedanta The same soul dwells within as in the other person Hence, we all become indivisibly connected to one another I have called it 'Applied Vedanta' Shankaracharya and other seers taught the people of India to love all equally as the soul in one body was the same as in the other

LOVE THINE ENEMY

The second saying is—'Love thine enemy' This gives us the key to win over the whole world. These days USA is trying to conquer the world, so also USSR Both are Christian nations I am afraid that the adherents of Christianity have waged greater number of wars amongst themselves and shed much more blood than those of any other religion

Devotion is not established by merely uttering the name of 'Lord' Devotion demands service of God and turning words into practice Now how many are there who can follow the precept of 'Love thine enemy'? I love the other fellow if he loves me, I beat him if he beats me I envy him if he envies me—in all this the initiative rests not with me but with the person opposite On the other hand, 'love thine enemy' keeps the initiative in my own hands I will treat all with love and affection whatever you may do, beat me or envy me Thus we can win the world by love Gautam Buddha also taught the same lesson—Enmity cannot be conquered by enmity, win anger by non-anger

The same was the message of Mahatma Gandhi I believe that Satyagraha, etc , resorted to by Gandhiji were an application of 'Love thine enemy ' formula All of you know that Gandhiji

was never tired of saying that we hated the British rule and not the British, hated evil and not the evil-doer He established this analysis right upto the end His love for England was not less than that for India Thus that saying includes such a big thing as Satyagraha-power

COMPLETE SURRENDER FOR FRIENDS

The third saying was spoken by Christ to his disciples during his last days Had he asked them simply to love one another it would not have been anything significant All religious preachers call upon their followers to love amongst themselves But Christ added—'As I loved you ' In other words, he wanted them to give up their all and 'sacrifice' themselves for one another as he did for them Complete surrender for the sake of friends—this is the lesson of that great teacher

Here I am placing before you the teachings of Jesus Christ as I have understood them and tried to follow in my humble little way But there is no doubt about it that the Bhoodan-Gramdan movement is on the path shown by him

MY ALSO-ISM

You, of the Christian faith, will not count me among your co-religionists, though you may do so if you are generous But certainly you will not take me as one of your Church and will say he is a Hindu after all But Christ has not made this distinction He says, "I have other mansions also" I, therefore, maintain that one mansion of his is what you call Christianity, another is what you call Vedantism, still another is what you call Buddhism, and yet another is what you call Islam and so on All these are his mansions Jesus Christ was nothing 'personal' "He is today, tomorrow and forever" He is upto eternity However, I do want to claim I am also Christian If you could realise the significance of this "also", it would be very beneficial for the world I call it "Also-ism" I am also a Christian, also a Hindu, also a Muslim and also a Buddhist I am 'also' We should be 'inclusive' and not 'exclusive' I asked a friend whether Christians of all denominations assembled together since they did not do so even for prayer He replied, "They do so these days" I remarked, "Thanks, you are then very kind to Jesus Christ "

RELIGION SHOULD BE INCLUSIVE

Differences are common in religion They are three in Hinduism and in others too There are six schools of philosophy in Hinduism, stressing difference in views about fundamentals But the heart behind them is one If there is difference in opinion, we must do "synthesis" and derive the benefit of the experiences of all We should never contend that we alone have the realisation of God The Quran says— 'We make no distinction between different messengers of God" All are sent by God—Ram, Krishna, Gautam, Mahavir, Jesus Christ, Abraham, Mohammed We do not differentiate among them and we believe in all of them My dear brethren ! No true religion can be "exclusive" It must be inclusive—"you are also mine", "you are also mine"

Perhaps you might be aware that after a continuous study of Jesus Christ for twenty-five or thirty years, I have compiled a little book "The Essence of the Christian Teachings"—I have given the chapter heading in Sanskrit Likewise I have studied the *Quran* and brought out its substance "Essence of Quran" I have also gone through the *Dhammapada* of Buddha an rearranged it I have also written a small commentary on the Gita, which, known as "Gita Pravachan" has been published in all the languages of the country I have also written something on *Japuji*, the *Granth Saheb* of the Sikhs.

THE CALL OF THIS AGE

What I want to stress upon is that I seek a synthesis of all religions People of various religions should have one heart and all should unite together to oppose evil The situation is that we get together for so many things, but when it comes to prayer or reciting God's name we will run away in different directions, as if there were a lathi charge ! In other words, God who units all has proved to be the breaking factors This is why I have adopted the way of silent prayer Today, due to their vain arrogance, religions have only served to tear hearts asunder If they do not take to synthesis or cementing hearts, a great danger looms ahead The atomic weapons are throwing a challenge to the people "Let all of you get united in heart as early as possible otherwise you will be no more" Hence it is very essential that all of us should unite

As you know I have been moving about for Gramdan and I am trying that entire Bihar may join Gramdan Hereby I desire your blessings for it and if possible your co-operation as well, so that the whole of this Ranchi district may accept Gramdan without any delay Wherever there is Christianity, there the complete village must become one And where there are *adi-vasis*, their tradition is based on unity Looked at from this point of view, the whole of this district is very eminently suited for Gramdan

14

KHADI : THE GENERATOR OF PEOPLE'S POWER

VINOBA BHAVE

Sometime ago when prominent Khadi workers of Bihar met Vinobaji they placed before him the critical situation facing their organisation in view of the decline in Khadi sale and rise in price of cotton and yarn and asked his opinion about the future of Khadi, of Khadi spinners, weavers and allied artisans and of Khadi workers Here is a free rendering of Vinobaji's moving reply

You could have well asked me about the future of India To my mind, if the future of Khadi be dark the future of India will be equally dark For, population is increasing day by day and amount of land per capita is decreasing In South Bihar, the population is scarce but water is hardly available On the other hand, population is very dense in North Bihar The land per capita in Saran and Darbhanga districts is one-fourth of an acre Within a few years, population will further go up and you will have hardly one-fifth of an acre of land This is the future ! Likewise, the population of India will get doubled within thirty-six years The subject of population control is often discussed and steps are in progress to implement the same But I am certain that unless and until people learn the way of *Brahmacharya* and self-restraint, population rise, despite any amount of effort you put up, cannot be halted.

INDUSTRY FOR EVERY HOME

In this situation it will be impossible to provide all employment through land Now I have been working for Gramdan, for encouraging the village landless to get up, for uniting the village On the other hand, the Government tries to arrange for supplying water and building bunds and dams Howsoever much the Government may do this, population will rise and land per capita will fall short In this situation you will have to provide some craft or industry to the people

In India a man gets old at sixty and the burden of his maintenance falls on his son But how can a young man who cannot maintain even himself, carry out the responsibility of supporting his aged father and children ? Thus you will have to provide the old, the youngsters and the womenfolk some easy work of craft which they can do sitting inside the home with little energy What industry can you offer ? Our friends in New Delhi think that bidi-making can be one such Well, bidi is injurious to the body Yet I submit that even if you introduce bidi making or some other industry of this nature, spinning will have its place Otherwise, money will be accumulated in the hands of the capitalists and village will be exploited, which will endanger the future of India In that situation, external invassion is a possibility Also violence and bloody disturbances may break up in the country

In U.S A land is abundant, about ten acres per capita There I won't urge for spinning and making Khadi Other industries are there Even if people remain without work for some days in U S A they can get food Hence, things are quite different Land alone will not solve our problems

PEOPLE'S WOEFUL DEPENDENCE ON GOVERNMENT

I believe that the future of India is closely linked with that of Khadi and of Khadi-workers But those who have the responsibility of planning don't think so As far as the public is concerned it has entrusted all functions upon the Government Giving vote for the Government implies conferring upon it the right to rule the people, to exploit them They, in effect, ask the Government to exploit them in such a fashion as to let both the exploiter and the exploited live What does this right of imposing all sorts of taxes

amount to, if not to looting the people ? None so far had given to anybody the right to loot in this manner Hence, the idea that the people should carry out their functions of their own accord is very important Today the people have become subordinate and depend upon Government for everything The question is how to get rid of this terrible situation

GENERATE LOKA-SHAKTI

The future of India cannot be bright without Khadi But if you stick merely to Khadi you will neither be able to generate Loka-Shakti nor to break that right to loot by Government If you combine Khadi with Gramdan and Gram-Swaraj the village people will be in a position to remark "We shall plan our village ourselves Who are you of Delhi and Patna, to plan for us Now we shall send our own men to the legislatures, not those thrust from above !"

When all villages of Bihar join Gramdan, people will establish Gram-Sabhas in the villages and send good people to the State Assembly and national Parliament With the village people seeting up their own nominees, none will be able to face them While eighty per cent of votes are in villages, only twenty are in cities A great characteristic of our democracy is that the right to vote vests with everybody, man or woman, be he or she educated or illiterate, be he or she living in city or village, without any distinction When the village people set up their own representatives, do their own planning and impart their own colour to the Government, there will then emerge a great power You will have to produce this power, otherwise the future of yours, of spinners, and of the nation is dark, very dark I have been in the Khadi movement from the very beginning and have devoted about a quarter of century to it without any break I am aware of the idea behind Khadi And yet I am going round the country propagating Gramdan and Gram-Swaraj I am not mad I know that India has no future without it

EAT BUTTER, PRODUCE KHADI

Somebody asked me, "Why is your movement confined to villages ? Why not in the cities too ?" Well, what is there in the

cities ? While milk, fruits and cereals are in villages, cups and plates are in cities What a calamity that the man with cup exploits the man with milk ! I would, therefore, call upon the village people to stop selling milk and drink it in a shell made of leaves What will you prefer—a cup full of air or a leafy shell full of milk ? People clamour for the cup You are selling butter and purchasing cloth My formula is 'eat butter and produce cloth' You will then succeed in controlling the market and the city trader would have to run to you in confusion and accept your terms

Have you heard about ants ? They do not worry for tomorrow The learned say that after man is no more ants would be there Ant is a small creature But its quality is to work in unison with other ants If an ant were to know that a piece of sweet is lying somewhere, it won't rush there to consume it alone, it will call thousands of ants and all of them together would carry that piece away I am saying all this in order to emphasize the need of setting up community life Only then will Khadi have a bright future When Shri U N Dhebar was here the other day I told him that the object of Khadi was not to provide employment but to wipe out power of the Military and set up People's own power The responsibility to provide work to the spinners is not yours, but Government's

YOUR FUTURE LIES IN YOUR HANDS

The future of yours, of Khadi and of the nation lies in your own hands If you think about Khadi in isolation, it will not survive When their is a boil in the stomach, applying ointment on the arm won't help If the stomach is sound, the arm too would be strong If you take to raising Khadi—strength instead of village strength, it will be like treating the arm Khadi is a part of our composite ideology Babu always used to say that we should do composite thinking, and not in parts

You have the problem of unsold stock There are seventy thousand villages in Bihar and you have Khadi worth Rupees three and a half crores with you In other words, you must sell five hundred rupees Khadi in each village If you could get ten customers purchasing Khadi of fifty rupees each, your task is

done But you would have to approach people in villages for their purpose Gramdan may or may not materialise You will have to go to each and every village and meet the people Go there and sell away all the Khadi with you

15

CALL FOR CONCERTED DRIVE

VINOBA BHAVE

We have not yet met with such an example of Gramdan drive as would have received the co-operation of all concerned at one and the same time But Champaran has provided an illustration of the same When I reached Motihari in the last week of July last, there seemed little hope They had only one block-dan to their credit But the Champaran district is associated all over the country with the name of Mahatma Gandhi So I thought of applying our entire strength There is little sense in saying that one would work according to one's powers, or '*Yatha-Shakti*', to use the Sanskrit phras Unfortunately, '*Yatha-Shakti,*' is interpreted in common parlance just countrary to what it means in Sanskrit, 'Doing according to strength' means almost not doing at all But in Sanskrit it means to exert until the last atom of your strength, or exerting until you are just about to reach the breaking point But we use 'Yatha-shakti' as mere sympathy which has little to do with resolute will

TWO GREAT NAMES

I entered Champaran with two great names, on my lips—God and Gandhiji I recollected them both together I found that the Congress Committee took to the movement whole-heartedly and so also did the Praja Socialist Party Other parties also joined the drive, but they do not count much there These two parties which command good support worked together with all their strength and joined shoulders together Though both would oppose

each other in the impending elections they co-operated with each other in the Gramdan campaign

There I told the people that if a village caught fire, would not the people override all considerations of party or caste and work together to put it out ? All do offer their co-operation in extingishing fire Likewise a fire has overtaken the whole country and ours is an humble attempt to put it down through Gramdan Hence all must equally apply themselves to this task Once the fire is controlled, you can play your 'election' game as you like But so far as this mission is concerned, you must work in unison Besides, the Gram Panchayats also got active Shri Vinodanand Jha arrived specially for that purpose Though he was not keeping well and the doctors had advised him rest, he came to Champaran and spent a week Thus the friends of the Congress, the P S P, the Panchayats, some teachers, some B D O's and of course, the workers of Khadi and Sarvodays, all of them worked together and launched drives in almost all the blocks

RESULT OF DETERMINED EFFORT

About seven blocks were obtained in Gramdan in the last three or four days I had a map of Champaran before me showing all the blocks I used to ask "So many yet left ! When will they be covered ?" I was told "Within (two or three days" While we had assembled for the Zila-dan function, two block dans were announced Thus work was done with a determined effort and will in Champaran which is full of all problems Also the season was not very favourable It was mostly raining and they had to wade through water to cross from one village to another Some of the workers felt ill, some suffered from scorpion-bite, some came across lions in their way ! And yet they staked their life and all for achieving Ziladan

The experience is that work accomplished in minimum time brings least amount of trouble in its wake, while the one taking longer time and done slowly causes heavy discomfiture But if you work together with all your effort and undergo a lot of sacrifice for a small period of time the goal would be reached quickly Hundreds of years ago Gautam Buddha taught us the lesson that if a good deed is done slowly, it gives shelter to evil in the heart. Had we been working in vacuum I would have not minded any

laziness on the part of the workers But when evil is rampant and good work is done at a snail's pace, then it will be converted into evil itself Hence this task is not to be done in stages or slowly.

JOURNEY ACROSS PIR PANJAL

I am reminded of my journey across Pir Panjal eight years ago Due to floods and landslides the route was unpassable Pandit Nehru had sent me a wireless message, "Please do not move ahead" Also it was raining furiously People said the Kashmir had not known such rains during the last one hundred years But I had to cross the Pir Panjal and there was no going back. I was told that Mahmud of Ghazni also had to turn back from this point and thus his dream to conquer was foiled However, I persisted The path was very narrow A little slip on either side would plunge one down a deep abyss and finish I just made a rule to sit for a minute after walking every five minutes and to look neither left nor right just straight So I proceeded When I reached the top I sat down And the miracle happened! It ceased to rain and bright sun shown in the sky To me it appeared as divine planning! On arriving at the destination, when Bakshi Gulam Mohammed, the then Chief Minister of Kashmir, greeted me saying, "How are you", I spoke just three words, "I am alive!"

WHEN DOES GOD HELP

The object of relating before you this story is to show you the importance of resolve God helps only when one makes a resolve beyond one's strength But when one's determination is below his strength, say of 12 ozs when the strength is 15 God says, 'you don't require my help, carry on!' But when one undertakes such a resolve beyond the strength of oneself or that of the society, a mighty resolve God comes forward with assistance I have experienced it many a time

You might have heard of Nepoleon's invasion of Austria The way was very long and the Alps mountains had to be crossed The alternative route to go round the Alps was much longer Nepoleon said "No, we will march over the Alps", "Many lives would be

lost," interrupted some body "Never mind," rejoined the commander "There is no life without death, dear one! Death is inevitable" So saying, he issued orders that the march should continue irrespective of those dead or fallen on the snow. As he entered the frontiers of Austria, he found the enemy forces had fled He had not to fight at all His very arrival marked conquest

Again, I am reminded of the floods of North Bihar in 1954 I was carrying on Bhoodan Yatra and was asked to forego the temptation of asking for Bhoodan in the flood-affected parts This did not appear to be reasonable to me and I said, 'when my people are in the grip of misery, I must go and see them I may not get Bhoodan, but I can tell them how to face the post-flood epidemics and all that" Then the yatra continued and the late Ram Deva Babu used to hold my hand for support What I saw was incredible Hundreds and thousands of people came in my meetings—they came on foot through chest-deep water or by boat Also they offered plenty of Bhoodan I can never forget those memorable scenes in the districts of Northern Bihar What I mean to say is that when one's pledge is to exert beyond one's capability unseen forces came to our rescue

LAUNCH A CONCERTED DRIVE

Often I have given the example of a heavy stone When it has to be removed, people gather in large numbers and apply their strength 'at one point and at one time' If they try at different hours, they can have enough of exercise but the stone would not budge an inch The same is true about concerted drive When all join together, God saves you and crowns your efforts with glory

On your western sides lies Uttar Pradesh whose workers also have taken a pledge for State-dan Their demand to have me with them is natural But I cannot go there until you fulfill your promise of Bihar-dan You were to do it by October 2, 1968 Never mind, you can complete it by the year end, December 31, 1968 If I go to U P without completing the work here, it will help neither you nor them and mine will be the wretched fate of a rolling stone Further, if you do well here and the post Gramdan work is carried out effectively, I need not go to U P or elsewhere

at all You can show here how to get up true Gram-Swaraj All this can be attained only if you work together, give up your petty engagements and apply yourself unitedly and wholeheartedly with a firm mind and with a dedicated spirit

16

VIOLENCE WILL HARM HINDI

VINOBA BHAVE

When Shri Jayaprakash Narayan came here he was kind enough to show me a copy of his statement on the Language Bill I am glad to add that I wholeheartedly agree with all that he has said in his statement on this controversial subject I felt no need to change even a single word therein But some thoughtless people became indignant at Jayaprakashji's statement and marched in a procession to his Patna residence, shouting slogans 'Jayaprakash is a traitor', 'Jayaprakash is enemy of Hindi, 'Jayaprakash, quit India', etc , according to their usual pattern They also said that they would not let J P address any meeting in Patna Perhaps they wanted to indulge in rowdyism at his home But he was out of station Through this statement, I want to make it clear that I endorse Jayaprakashji's statement in full I trust that the Hindi people would not regard me as enemy of Hindi for the same.

As regards the Language Bill, it is simple and straightforward. This is but an attempt to fulfill the assurances offered by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri I wish to make some observation on this question as I too have been connected with it When anti-Hindi riots broke out in Tamilnad and took a furious turn, I declared fast for an indefinite period because I felt that misunderstandings were behind all that violence Though I am not mentally very much inclined to the idea of fasting, yet some voice within me impelled me to carry on fast, which lasted for five days Shri Gulzari Lal Nanda, the then Union Home Minister, came to me and conveyed my view-point

on phone to the Chief Ministers to all the states I had stressed on three things — (i) Violence should not be resorted to on this question, (ii) English should not be imposed on those who do not want English, (iii) Hindi should not be imposed on those who do not want Hindi. All the Chief Ministers accepted these three conditions and my fast came to an end

What we see all around emanates from want of understanding of the special circumstances in India Every language has a nation of its own in Europe. Europe minus Russia is almost equal to India Here we have fifteen or sixteen languages You require a visa and passport to go from one nation to another in Europe They are trying to set up a Common Market in Europe, but without success Europe is certainly advanced in Science, but sociology has not developed there to the same extent India has shouldered the responsibility of setting up an indivisible unit of 15 16 distinct developed languages In this situation if we do not observe tolerance the country would be split up into pieces and foreign aggression is also a possibility This is ordinary common-sense At that time Anti-Hindi riots took place in Tamilnad and now Hindi people started the same thing against English Some Hindi people maintain that English should not be given the status of an associate language and if given, a time limit should be fixed They have also remarked that very much consideration should not be paid to the views of non-Hindi people But Hindi can never be acceptable to non-Hindi people in the manner in which the Hindi people are insisting for Hindi This work can be accomplished only by love

I have gone round the whole of South India on foot During my padyatra I spoke in Hindi and my speeches were translated to the people there At one place I was told that the common folk there were against Hindi I then made it a point to speak on that very subject to the audience and then explained the whole thing What I told them is as follows

> "Like the innings in cricket, innings of give and take in thought have been going on between the North and the South Buddha and Mahavir came from the North of the South and taught the lesson of compassion Later, it was the turn of the South and Shankaracharya, Ramanuja, Vallabhacharya, Madhavacharya, etc , went from the South to the North and preached their gospel of *Bhakti* (devotion) They used

Sanskrit language for their mission because it was then in vogue throughout all the provinces Had they struck to their own mother-tongue, they would not have been able to propagate their message Again. there began the innings of the North and Ram Mohan Roy, Gokhale, Ranade and Vivekanand, etc , came to the South Now it is the turn of the South to play its innings in North There is an atmosphere of holiness round about temples in every village of South India Your cinemas also have more sanctity than those in Hindi As you are adept in English there will be little difficulty for you in becoming adepts in Hindi If you would not learn Hindi you will not be able to play your innings "

I found that they listened to me peacefully with rapt attention. What I want to point out is that they are not unreasonable But they will not agree if Hindi people will insist By carrying on these anti-English demonstrations the Hindi people are losing my sympathy in vain I do not think that anybody else has propagated the cause of Hindi as much as I have done in the course of my padayatra across the length and breadth of whole of India.

17

LANGUAGE PROBLEM

VINOBA BHAVE

OUR GLORIOUS HERITAGE

Unity and Diversity

There are many religions, languages and castes in India [This great land has become the meeting place of different social groups] No other country provides such a grand spectacle—a coming together of people speaking different languages, professing different relgions and belonging to different castes Yet it is remarkable that all these people consider India to be their home, their country Eurpe would be considered rather backward in this respect They are still passing through tribalism Each language-group forms a separate nation and a separate country there, whereas we have one nation comprising fourteen developed languages How did we achieve this unity despite such diversity ? Was it through force ? No, such things cannot be achieved by force They are accomplished only through love and mutual goodwill This ideal of love has flowed through Indian history for thousands of years That is why the country remains one today [1] While our diversity is an asset, we have a common cultural strain running throughout India Like the blending of different tunes into a sweet melody, the different elements in India have mingled to make a beautiful and composite culture

This simultaneous unity and diversity is the strength of India We should take advantage of both In order to profit by diversity we need to learn the languages of neighbouring provinces This

would facilitate contact with each other, and enable mutual understanding And in order to derive the full benefit of our unity we need a common language for the whole of the country

Mother-Tongue and National Language—the Two Eyes

A man should have two eyes to see The mother-tongue is the one eye and the national (or common) language should be the other We should learn one or two more languages besides these two. It will not be burdensome on the countary, it would be interesting [2]

It was Gandhiji who had suggested that the spiritual and cultural unity of India could be fostered through Hindi Gandhiji's mother-tongue was Gujarati and not Hindi. Yet he placed Hindi before the people and deputed his own son to Madras to spread it People willingly started learning Hindi We find that in the south also people have been learning Hindi of their own free will But now they have become apprehensive as they feel that Hindi may be imposed on them by law However, on my own behalf and on behalf of India and Sarvodaya, I wish to assure them that they need have no such fear Hindi will not be imposed on the south and, if it were done, Sarvodaya will rise in opposition People realise that it is good to learn Hindi. But they get frightened under compulsion So, Hindi should be spread gradually and with love [3]

A Game of Cricket

I had said a few days ago that a little deeper insight into Indian history will show that (in the matter of cultural development) a game of cricket has been going on here for the last ten thousand years To begin with the Buddhist, the Jani and the Vedic preachers went from the north to the south The south thus received the message of the great thinkers of the north The innings of the north was then over and the South started batting. Shankar, Ramanuj, Madhva, Vallabh—all great souls of the south—journeyed towards the north where thousands of persons became their disciples and followers Those in the north devoutly accepted their philosophy of *Bhakti* as the southerners had done earlier Saint Tulsidas belonged to the Ramanuj cult, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu of Bengal to the Madhva cult, Swami Ramkrishna of Bengal and Saint Gyaneshwar of Maharashtra had faith in Shanker's philosophy, Considerable parts of Gujarat and Marwar

were influenced by philosophy, of Vallabh, so profound was the influence of the south over the north !

The innings of the south having come to a close, the second innings of the north commenced I have noticed in the south that various places are adorned with the photographs of Ramkrishna, Vivekanand, Tagore, Arvind, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru Even if we were to leave out political peronalities, it is remarkable that the schools, monasteries, ashrams, etc, all abound in the pictures of Ramkrihna, Vivekanand and Gandhi Then there are 'Gokhale Halls' and Ranade Halls' in the south What does all this signify ? A large stream of ideas again flowed southward from the times of Ram Mohan Ray to Gandhi

South to Bat Now

We have now achieved independence and are beginning a new era Henceforth, the south should begin their second innings Except the Union ministers no one from the north is likely to come to this side now They (the ministers) also come because they have to I (Vinoba) may be the last man in The vision that I have of India and the knowledge which I possess makes me think that now ideas will flow from the south to the north Take for example the idea of renunciation of ownership In the literature of no other language have I found the idea more strongly propounded than in Tamil that there should be no ownership Right from *Kural* to *Bharatiyar* every writer has denounced private ownership

In the south we find a big temple in the centre and the village sprung up around it as if, the whole village was dedicated to God ! In the north we do not find villages laid out in this fashion The idea that the whole village is one and should form a single family—is given to us by the south The literature of the south abounds in this concept Then, the south is more peaceful than the north The concept of peace is given to us by the south It is again in the south that we see Indian culture in its pristine form Hence, I say that now it is the south which will and should open their second innings The only delay in starting the innings will be the time which our south Indian friends take in learning Hindi

The innings cannot be played on the basis of English You cannot inspire the masses of people through English Shankar

of Kerala Ramanuj of Tamilnad, Madhva of Karnatak and Vallabh of Andhra all spoke different languages Yet, the thoughts of all of them spread over the whole of India, because they adopted Sanskrit as their medium which was the language of cultural intercourse at that time That is why their treatises are today as extensively read in the north as in the south We in the north study Shankaracharya's works more than of anyone else If he had confined himself to Malabar and had written only in the regional language, his works, though still useful, would not have been able to attract and serve the whole of India Nammalwar the Guru of Ramanuj was not less learned than his disciple But he is little known in the north while the name of Ramanuj is a house-hold word there The reason again is that the latter adopted Sanskrit, the national language of that age, as his medium The great men of the south at their time realised this and hence their message could reach the north during the first innings Now in their second innings the people of the south should follow suit and become experts in Hindi as quickly as possible For, if one has new ideas to offer, Hindi provides the best medium today

Sanskrit as National Language

Some people ask why Sanskrit should not become our national language We need not worry on that score It will practically be Sanskrit, because the words will be from Sanskrit while the inflexions will be of Hindi In other words, it will be Sanskrit made easy, because Sanskrit inflexions, etc , are difficult What is important is that Sanskrit has a vast treasure of wordroots It is a language which has almost unlimited capacity for multiplying words Many words can be formed from one root That is a remarkable feature of Sanskrit But with the use of Hindi inflexions it will become easier And then, the south is also bound to exert some influence on it (Hindi) Hence, there is no reason to worry [4]

WHY HINDI ?

Hindi is like basic language for India In a way it has got a limited vocabulary It may probably not even be our richest language Yet, it is the daughter of a very rich language and the

sister of many well-developed languages And what is more, it is the language of love and religion Who made it such ? Gandhiji, in the modern time ! But even Gandhiji, with all his strength, could not have made Hindi our national language if it did not deserve that status It is the pilgrims of our country going from one end to another who have made Hindi the language of propagating love The constant flow of pilgrims from Badari-kedar to Rameshwaram and vice-versa made this possible This is not what is happening only today It has been goining on for the last 300 to 400 years Before this period, Sanskrit occupied this place Today Hindi fulfils that role Hindi is nothing else than simple Sanskrit The words come from Sanskrit, only the declensions are different The grammer may be supplied by our south Indian brothers What a beautiful language shall this be ! Hence, there is no reason whatsoever to be afraid of Hindi [5]

If I did not command the help of Hindi language, it would not have been possible for me to spread the revolutionary message of Bhoodan-Gramdan in village after village from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Assam to Kerala If I had delivered the message in Marathi I would not have succeeded beyond Maharashtra English would have helped me in some provinces, but even there it would not have been possible to convey the idea through English from village to village The regional languages have their place and people of a particular region may be inspired with the help of the respective regional language English has also got its own place To some extent it helps us in maintaining contact with foreign countries I have deliberately used the words 'to some extent', because there is a considerable part of the world where English is not understood Again, English would be of some help to us in acquiring scientific knowledge and also as a link between different parts of India While thus admitting the importance of English, I would like to stress that Hindi has got its own place and functions (which cannot be fulfilled by English) The regional and the national languages are like the two eyes of a person. Lord Shiva is supposed to have a third eye which denotes the vision of knowledge Besides the two eyes mentioned above, Sanskrit will be our third eye while the study of English is like using a spectacle. Everybody does not require to put on a spectacle Only some people need it sometimes Such is also the proper place of English. It may help some to have a view of the outside world [6]

No Compulsion

Hindi has been recognised as the national language There is no compulsion in it. The country has willingly accepted it There is no cause for apprehension in this for those in the South In fact, they stand to gain If the people of the south learn Hindi they will be able to spread their ideas in the whole of India There are many ideas of the south which should reach the North There is a large amount of literature in the southern languages Literary activity in Tamil has been going on for the last two thousand years while in Kannada and Telugu it goes back to one thousand years and so also in Malayalam There are a great many ideas and concepts in the literature of the south which should spread throughout India But for this you will have to take the help of an All-India language The ideas of Shankar and Ramanuj are current throughout India In the whole of northern India today Shankar and Ramanuj, Madhva and Vallabh are quoted as authorities Not one of them had Sanskrit as his mother-tongue, but all of them accepted it as the vehicle of their ideas This is why their ideas could find a way throughout India, otherwise these should have remained confined to their respective provinces Sanskrit was the national language in those days Today Hindi has acquired that place Hence, the earlier you learn Hindi the more you will stand to gain and so will India [7]

New Cultural Language

Hindi will gradually pervade all walks of life but the regional languages shall flourish because the common man's language can never disappear There will also be good literature in his language the language will have its independent status and glory and its development will be welcome

The new all-India language will be Hindi but it will be Hindi only in name Actually it will mostly be (simple) Sanskrit and then it would be 'all India' Some Sanskrit words are current in all our Indian languages

Such words may be termed as omni-lingual It is surprising that a dictionary of such words has not yet been compiled I would suggest that a dictionary of common words found in all the Indian languages be compiled soon These words will be current coin in every language There will be some 3,000 ro more such words, of these about 400 or 500 will be Urdu words and

the rest Sanskrit This will be the collective treasure of our country Additional new words will come from Sanskrit and will be used in all the languages Thus, shall evolve a common cultural language of India—and that will be Hindi

The cultural language will be Hindi but the language that will (directly) serve the people will be the mother-tongue All literature meant to serve the masses will be in the mother-tongue And, literature pertaining to All-India culture will grow in Hindi and from the south will spring up many good writers in Hindi We should view this matter in this perspective and with foresight and accordingly accept Hindi [8]

WHAT TYPE OF HINDI ?*

India is a vast country We need a common language to carry on our work Hindi is best suited to become our common language Some have suggested Sanskrit in place of Hindi, some others suggest English (I have already discussed the question of Sanskrit) As regards English, it is a highly debtable point whether it is possible for our 36 crores of people ever to speak English in the same manner as the English do Only a very few can and need learn English The citizens of free India will not solely depend upon English If they do so, their outlook will remain one-sided Hence some should learn German, some Russian, some Persian, some Arabic, some Chinese and some others Japanese Some should, of course, learn English also May be that more persons will learn English We may give it the first place among foreign languages But it is neither possible nor useful for all to learn this alien tongue It would definitely be harmful

I have studied foreign languages also and have thought over the question of their area of influence We cannot keep contact with China through English We will have to learn Chinese as they must learn Hindi Then alone can the contacts be maintained Our government cannot negotiate with the Russian government through English It must talk to them in Hindi English cannot be the common language even for all the educated persons in India If we were to learn only English, our vision will get clouded But if some of us were to learn English, some German, some Chinese and some others Japanese, we shall be seeing things

*Speech at Chennapattan (Mysore) 9.10 57.

in their right perspective, there will then be no mask on our eyes. So, English cannot be the language even for all our educated citizens

Now, as for Sanskrit, its glory remains unsurpassed among our Indian languages Nay, its glory is unrivalled even among the world languages since it is a very ancient language full of rich literature—especially spiritual and metaphysical literature It is being studied in different parts of the world This will continue to grow In India too its study is bound to grow, yet, it cannot become our common language of expression Hindi alone will be the language to serve this purpose

Hindi with simple Sanskrit

Hindi, with simple Sanskrit words and simple Hindi grammar, will be our common Indian language Such Hindi will continue to flourish The existing Persian and Arabic words in Hindi will also be retained this Hindi will serve north India. But the national language for the whole of India will be Hindi with simple Sanskrit words and simple Hindi declensions and constructions This alone will be a practical proposition. So, when people propose Sanskrit (to be our national language), I appreciate their views and I say that we shall retain Sanskrit for word roots, but not for its declensions Such Hindi will be our national language

Let us try to understand the meaning of National Language Kannad, Tamil, Marathi, Bangala etc are also the languages of our nation (and so national languages), but the common All-India language of understanding will be Hindi As we talk of *lingua-franca*, so Hindi will be the *lingua Indica* This is not a new thing, it has been there since the good old days Our pilgrims from Kashi to Rameshwaram continuously spread Hindi Thus it has naturally become a common All-India language

Let us Vow to become 'Trinetra'

Here for example in this Gokarna region, everyone must know Kannada and Hindi Such persons will, so to say, be possessed with both the eyes Those knowing Sanskrit as well will become *Trinetra* (त्रिनेत्र) * Gokarna is Lord Shankar's holy region You

*Lord Shiva is supposed to have a third eye also Hence he is known as *Trinetra*

should take here a vow to become '*Trinetra*' It will be easier for ladies and children to do so If the men-folk were to say that they did not have enough time to learn so many languages, let our ladies talk to them in Sanskrit while serving meals Ladies ought to learn three languages Through the mother-tongue they will be able to serve the common folk, through Hindi they will come in contact with the whole country and Sanskrit will enrich their spiritual knowledge They will get such three-fold benefit ! So, let those, who can, take a solemn pledge on this holy day to learn these three languages [9]

Hindi and Urdu

Now, as regards Urdu, I have already said above that such Persian and Arabic words as are current in Hindi should be retained As a matter of fact *Hindi* and Urdu both languages belong to our country They are two of the 14 languages belong to our Constitution (There are other languages in India also besides these fourteen and I wish that they should also prosper In fact, primary education should be given to children in those languages For example there is *Tulu* language in Karnataka which is not enumerated in the fourteen languages I wish that primary education should be imparted to Tulu children in Tulu and subsequent education in Kannada When I talk about the development of even those language which are not included among the fourteen in the schedule, it is obvious that these fourteen have necessarily to be developed All these languages are rich in literature Urdu has its own importance and place among these fourteen In a sense, Urdu is a form of Hindi A language is distinguished by its inflexions, verbs and pronouns All these three are common in Hindi and Urdu Any two languages which have these common features are virtually forms of the same language Simple Hindi and simple Urdu are really one, though there is some difference in literary Hindi and literary Urdu I wish that their literary forms should also grow but I wish that for common conversation we should evolve a form of simple Hindi which will equally be Urdu I want such basic Hindi to become current, which in effect will be basic Urdu also But this cannot be done by compulsion In fact, such a language is already current among the people, only we have to give it recognition.[10]

HOW ENGLISH WAS IMPOSED

"Your slogan is 'Jaya Jagat' (Hail the World !) What, then, is your attitude towards English which is spoken throughout the World ?"—the students have asked me

It is a good question The question of education came up before the East India Company when it began to rule here Some said that education should be imparted on the old lines But Macaulay advocated English education Ultimately, the latter proposition succeeded and the government introduced English here Not only was English language taught, but the entire education was also imparted through English When in the High School, I dared not ask any question in my mother-tongue but had to do so in English Marathi was our mother-tongue—my teacher's as well as mine But I had to ask in English, "May I come in, Sir ?" All subject were taught in English So much so that even Marathi was to be learnt through English Sanskrit was of course taught through English

People Divided into two Classes

Thus English was imposed on the country in the most unnatural way This resulted in the emergence of two classes in the country, one of which remained completely illiterate After 150 years of English rule, only 10 per cent of the population became literate and the rest 90 per cent remained illiterate Those educated got instructed through English Consequently, there was a gulf between the educated and the illiterate, and this rift has harmed the nation greatly No knowledge could reach the villages and the educated thought that they could not talk about what they had learnt except in English In fact our languages were in no way inferior to English When I say so I am not boasting as I have made a comparative study of about twelve Indian languages used in the north and the south of this country and also foreign ones like English, Persian and Arabic Last year a friend from Japan was with us I learned Japanese from him. For some days I also studied Chinese So, when I express my views, I do so from a comparative angle

The Real Strength of a Language

The potency of language depends on the roots The number of roots a language possesses determines its virility If we do

not have any particular word in our language, it is no dificiency of the language We can import such words from other languages as we usually do, e g , *motor*, *station*, *table* Such borrowings present no difficulty The number of such words may grow in thousands A machine has many minute parts These have different names To master the machine completely one may, therefore, have to learn about 200 different words These words enrich the vocabulary, but they do not add to the potency of the language When uses grow, words increase and we have no dearth of such words in our Indian languages There is no harm even in borrowing them But, essentially the power of a language lies in its roots Latin possesses the largest number of roots The number in Kannad is less Yet, you have your own roots, and then you have that suffix in '*isu*' You may take any word and form a root Using Sanskrit words you can make '*rakshisu*' '*gamanisu*', etc You can, thus, borrow some Sanskrit roots Kannad will thus come to possess great potency The same is true of other Indian languages Thus, there is no deficiency in our languages

Language of Administration

Some persons feel that our language is not competent for transacting governmental business This is wrong I admit that in order to express and propagate the knowledge of science, we shall have to borrow words from western languages as this is a new subject for us But if our language is not capable of transacting administrative work, why did we ask the English to quit ? It is a mistake to think that our language does not possess words for conducting our normal work People should get proper food and clothing, production should go up, quarrels should decrease, while sanitation and agriculture should develop Can't we express all this but in English ? The argument that we cannot, reveals a slavish mentality English can never occupy that place now which it did in the past. Now mother-tongue will take its due place national language will occupy its proper position and among the various foreign languages (which we may consider necessary to study) English will just be one Agreed that among these, for the time being, English will be studied more But even this thought would be a great danger that if a foreign language is to be learnt, it shall only be English. It is fallacious to think that English is

the language of the world The world is very much bigger than English

Proper Place of English

China and India together constitute half of the world Some of us should learn Chinese, some Japanese and some others will be required to learn Persian and Arabic because all these are our neighbouring languages Among the European languages, some should learn Russian and some others German, French or English If all were to learn English, their perspective will get blurred The gates of knowledge will not open With green glasses everything appears green Were we to attempt to acquire the knowledge of Japan, China and Russia through English, we shall be handicapped by this veil on our eyes and so would not be able to see things in their proper perspective Therefore, if we want to gain true knowledge about say, China, we should study Chinese Then alone shall we be able to gain knowledge in an independent manner We shall be doing an injustice to China if we study her through English It is true that modern knowledge is found in English That is why we do not want to banish it from here We wish to keep it in our home but in its proper place. If it were to usurp an important place in our home and refuse entry to others, it would be very wrong India now occupies a place in the international world When we want to correspond with Russia, shall we do so in English ? When Chou En-Lai came here, he did not utter a single word in English All that he spoke was in Chinese Even his message to India was in the Chinese language. Bulganin also did not lecture (here) in English may have an important place in the world, but it should be clearly understood that the world is very much bigger than English Gradually Asia is coming in the forefront Now the Chinese, the Kannad, the Hindi and the Japanese languages will grow in importance.

Language of the Future

We find enough knowledge in English today But the knowledge of how to preserve world peace is not found therein In future people will learn that language which will establish love and peace in the world I understand there is a great liberary in London stocking important works in every language Similarly, there is another such library in Germany. But this is only a show

of knowledge-worship I say this because during a war they do not hesitate to bomb these libraries Londoners will be pleased to bomb Berlin and reduce the books to ashes Those in Berlin will follow suit by bombing London and destroying the collections I would, therefore, ask is it worship of knowledge or a fraud on it? Do you think the language of people who collect world's best books with the one hand and bomb them samelessly by the other is going to occupy an important place in the world? This cannot be People in the world will learn that language which has the capacity to foster love and peace We should certainly acquire knowledge wherever it may be found The Gita asserts that knowledge is sacred Hence, we shall acquire knowledge from all sources English contains modern knowledge, hence we shall utilise it as a medium for the acquisition of that knowledge but we shall not permit it to vitiate our perspective

English Has to Go

These days it is being advocated in Tamilnad that the article in the Constitution about Hindi should be deleted Now, what can I say about these people? I can not say that these persons are not patriots Probably their saying so is also prompted by the love of the country But with all respect it must be said that they are not far-sighted Confining oneself to one language is wrong We run a great risk by desiring that the official work of the country should all be carried on in English It is an illusion to think that we can maintain international relations only through English If you go to China and speak there in English, you will create a scene! Again, speak in English in Russia and see the fun

Many labour under a misconception that English is necessary for teaching science There is no doubt that English treasures vast scientific knowledge But the knowledge of science will not spread unless and until it is rendered in the mother-tongue Some English words will no doubt be retained Take, for example, the word 'loud-speaker' This can be used in our conversation without disturbing the grammar Its use will put us to no harm But to say that the entire education should be in English and not in the mother-tongue is wrong The knowledge contained in English can be imported in our languages The few who wish to learn English may do so But when all this burden (of English

education) has to be borne by the children, their vitality is sapped. If you wish to make an experiment, why not do it in England ? See what happens there if the children are taught through Kannada ! Their physique and spirit both are bound to be shattered If we impart knowledge through a foreign tongue, we would also suffer the same fate.[11] Of course, if you were to visit only the big cities and stay there in big hotels you may find there persons knowing English But if you wish to gather knowledge about social conditions there and to establish close relations with people, you cannot afford to remain wedded to English It would be a blunder to do so This does not mean that I recommend the immediate abolition of English It may remain here for sometime but gradually it has to go and go it must ![12]

Cultural Importance of Languages

The culture of every country has got its own mission. Our mission is not to imitate America, Russia or China There is no country in the world like India In which other country will you find 14 or 15 developed languages functioning side by side ? China is a very big country but it has only one language—Chinese There may be some minor differences in its provincial variations as we find, for example, in the north and the south of Karnatak. But the common Chinese language is one Europe again is very large There are many powerful and developed languages in Europe But all these languages do not form part of one nation as in India We find there nations carved out on linguistic basis, not linguistic provinces Why are France, Belgium, Holland and Germany separate nations ? Because their languages are different There is a common religion in the whole of Europe, and the various European languages are also closely related to one another Their script is also common There is no difference in their cultures too But they have created artificial barricades—the Maginot and the Sigfrid Lines—between two nations Probably they are sorry that there is no mountain separating them They fight with one another scantly realising that their fight is like civil war If France wages a war against Germany, the war between them is called a national war !

Russia no doubt has many languages but they are not so developed On the other hand, every Indian language is highly developed Tamil possesses a literature which is two thousand years

old and Kannad literature is also twelve hundred years old European languages do not possess such ancient literature and Russia does not possess such developed languages India alone has made this experiment of keeping various developed languages in a nation From this point of view, India is politically very much advanced Europe will still take scores of years to learn that one nation can contain many developed languages India has thus her own mission However, if it remains wedded to English, it will lose its mission and will not be able to maintain neutrality [13]

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Since the advent of the English rule in India people have been divided into two classes Some have become educated and others have remained illiterate More than sixty per cent have had no schooling whereas a few have had the benefits of higher English education Thus have been formed two classes in India—those with Engligh education and those without it Now that States have been organised on linguistic basis, we hope that there will be much greater study of the mother-tongue and through the mother-tongue the two classes can be merged into one

Mother-Tongue, The Natural Medium

The English ruled here for more than hundred years But the growth of science in India was negligible This was because the knowledge of science, was locked up in English books Science is associated with nature There can be and is—science in agriculture Science may also be there in cooking and in sanitation Thus there is need of science in every walk of life However, since they did not know English, millions of persons were deprived of the knowledge of science And now after hundred years we complain that there are only a few books on science in the mother-tongue Whose fault it is ? It is of the mother-tongue or of the planners ? Yet even today it is being asserted that we cannot learn science without English This appears to be correct At present advanced scientific studies are possible only through English, French or German But the knowledge of science cannot be spread in India through these languages If science is not connected with the mother-tongue science will remain confined within the mind of the science-student We are commiting a

blunder We fail to realise that such an important thing as science cannot become widespread without the medium of the mother-tongue

Leave aside the talk of science It has come from the West. Self-knowledge, however, is a plant of our own soil It has been here since the ancient times Sanskrit is a language of the country Thousands of Sanskrit words are found in other languages. And Sanskrit is not a foreign language as English Yet, all our philosophical literature would have remained locked up in Sanskrit had it not been rendered in the languages of the people Could it then have spread as it has ?

Upanishads contain a lofty philosophy of life The *Shad-darshans* possess systems of philosophy Those desiring to study advanced knowledge should study Sanskrit For the quest of higher knowledge, the study of Sanskrit is quite essential But how can self-knowledge be spread if Sanskrit is used as the medium for its utilisation and propagation ? Research into knowledge and its day to day application are two different things Propagation of such knowledge is yet a different matter Our saints taught self-knowledge through the mother-tongue so that it could really be practised and propagated this practice should be emulated. Even self-knowledge which is India's forte, could not have spread in the country if it had remained in Sanskrit [14]

It was through the mother-tongue that spiritual knowledge spread in India Originally it was in Sanskrit. Shankara, Ramanuj, Madhavacharya all studied Sanskrit But this knowledge reached the villages only through the languages of the people I have noticed this in every State Purandardas and Basaveshwar spread this knowledge to every home in the south They wrote in simple language Even small girls here sing songs composed by them Thus did spiritual knowledge reach every hut and hamlet [15]

The same applies to science For advanced scientific research languages like English and French will have to be learnt. But for the use and propagation of science there is no recourse except the mother tongue We can easily grasp the distinction between research and its application The invention of wireless telegraphy is one thing and the use of the radio another Radio can be used by all Electricity is utilised in every home Press the button and there is light The invention of electricity, however, required

great minds Those interested in inventions and research will have to study other languages besides their mother-tongue and will have to bring the terminology of these languages in their own tongue But for the utilisation, application and propagation of the fruits of that research we shall have to use the mother-tongue

No Imposition of English

Even today an attempt is being made to see that children acquire knowledge of higher English For this there is only one way out Let English not be imposed on many Then alone some will be able to learn good English If the majority of the people are not be taught English, its standard will not remain high So there is no point in many learning it During the English rule it had some utility Now only some persons need learn good English Why should it then be imposed on lacs of persons ? Certain persons are suggesting that all children should be taught English right from the Secondary stage This is being stated in a subdued tone for they also know that it is a mistaken suggestion It would be wrong to impose English on all Retention of English, when it is not needed, is another error This would cause unnecessary burden which would not be tolerated The expenditure involved would also be large

A Fallacious Approach

The presumption that if English is taught from early childhood, children will be able to speak and learn English well is fallacious Where there is English environment, English can be taught from childhood. But where language is to be taught through grammer, one cannot learn other languages unless one has acquired good knowledge of one's mother-tongue and its grammer Ignorant of one's mother tongue and its grammer, how can one learn the grammar and literature of other languages ? Hence it is futile and completely unwise to teach through the English medium Yet, certain persons hold that knowledge will grow if English is used as the medium But, what is the special virtue in English that it deserves to be the medium ?[16]

There are two or three view current at Present in India about the medium of instruction There are people who advocate the regional language as the medium There are others who think that while education up to the Primary stage should be imparted through the language of the region, all higher studies should be

through the medium of Hindi instead of English, since the former is the national language Some others are of the opinion that since English is a rich language we should not displace it At least college education must be imparted through English Each of these three views is supported by eminent educationists and well-wishers of the country

In my opinion all education, from the beginning to the end, should be imparted through the medium the regional language A study of the national language (as a subject) should at the same time be made compulsory, University Professors who go to another University to deliver lectures and do not know the language of that region should be allowed to speak in the national language I have expressed these views on many occasions and I believe that this is the right course for us While strengthening the regional languages this would also encourage the use of Hindi Many of the Indian languages are sufficiently developed and there is an innate capacity in them for the creation of new words If education is imparted through these languages and the study of the common national language is also made compulsory then both the languages will enrich each other I have also made it plain that those whose mother-tongue is Hindi must learn some other *modren* regional language

We have got many developed languages in India It is not possible for people to learn all these languages as I have fortunately managed to do Everybody may not be able to get all the facilities that I did Neither is it expected of people and that they would learn all these languages But everybody can learn at least one of the neighbouring languages and I think they should

Hindi as Link Language

Besides, Hindi should be taught throughout India, because we have accepted it as the link language There was a time when Sanskrit used to unite the whole of India from Kashmir to Kanyakumari Although Shankar was born in Malabar, he could converse with people in Mithila (Bihar) and Kashi through Sanskrit Although not for the masses, Sanskrit was the medium for the thinkers for exchange of ideas Consequently it maintained the unity of India Today Sanskrit cannot perform this function, it can be done only through Hindi.[17]

Some persons think that since we have to maintain relations

with foreign countries, we must know English This too, in my view, is fallacious Proper political relations with other countries are possible only if our country is strong We have achieved political freedom The nation, however, will not survive without economic freedom Preparing ourselves to talk with the foreigners in their tongue is, in a way, suicidal We shall not be able to utilise indigenous intelligence then Those who can speak fluently in English may be good, but they cannot become good thinkers Such persons are no good for us Suppose we have a Chanakya who does not know English, shall we not profit by his wisdom ? Really speaking, our reprsentatives in the United Nations Organisation should speak in Hindi It is not so at present but this does us no credit To think that we acquire prestige by speaking in English at the United Nations Organisation is erroneous

Double Blunder

The entire work of the Government of India is transacted in English What is the result ? People in every home in America and England can know how the admistration of this country is being carried on but the same is not known to the farmers of our own land There emerge two points To expose our country's affairs before others is a mistake, to hide them from our own farmers is a greater mistake To lay bare the affairs of the nation before others is no act of wisdom At least those in politics will concede this point I have faith in *Ahimsa* All my things are open But politicians believe that they cannot keep their cards open In Government they take an oath of secrecy They understand the value of secrecy According to them it is wrong to keep open before others matters pertaining to the country's administration, and, it is yet a greater mistake to hide them from our own people Two mistake are thus being committed here simultaneously I wonder why such a simple matter is not well understood

Evading Manual Labour

Let us consider it from another angle Everything which is essential for life is created by labour All food, clothing and other necessities are the products of labour Millions of people have to do this physical labour We have, however, given them a very low status Today what use is education being put to in

India ? It has become a means of evading physical labour We think education will enable us to avoid physical labour and that it will provide us better food than what the food-grower himself, will obtain Thus we consider that education has two advantages :

(1) We shall be freed from physical labour,
(2) Our standard of living shall be higher than that of the manual workers

The distinction between the two—the educated and the uneducated—is today apparent The dress, the posture, the work and the language of the educated are entirely different More than what others spend on their clothes, the educated spend on soap The oil consumed by the hair of the educated is more than what others consume in their body through food The total expenditure of the latter on food is less than what the educated spend on drinks alone The dogs of the educated secure more than what the children of the other section get ! The contradiction is obvious Do you think *Ahimsa* can thrive in such a condition ? I am astonished to find that many times it is the exploiters who advocate *Ahimsa* What they mean is that their status should remain undisturbed Such *Ahimsa* cannot last this is no *Ahimsa*, it is hypocrisy *Ahimsa* will dawn when we are ready to give up our rich possessions A teacher should constantly bear this in mind It is apprehended that the present education might retain or aggravate these differences A teacher should feels the same pride in teaching as in sweeping the school-building The dignity Lord Krishna experienced while attending on the horses was in no way less than what he did while preaching the Gita Education must be characterised by such an attitude Presentday education, however, is just the reverse

The third effect of present education is that it has divided life into parts A boy continues his education till he is twenty-five and it is considered the duty of the parents to feed him all along A college student consumes the produce of twenty acres. The expectation of life grows shorter with higher education The boy passes F A (Inter), then B A , and then M A., and the parents continue to spend We find to initiative or achievement in the lives of the children They are not seen undertaking any vigorous work Then, education is not over even when a boy completes

twenty-five or twenty-six After completing his studies at Bombay or Delhi he goes to London and thence to Washington He reaches thirty his eyesight deteriorates, his lungs are affected and his organs and senses become weak The habit to work is lost Moreover, an ordinary wife will not do now An educated wife is needed So neither of them will do any work in the home Hence, a servant becomes indispensable This means more money The family also needs a doctor Thus, after ten or twelve years of service the man grows old At thirty he begins to do something, at forty he is a spent up force and at fifty he starts awaiting his death In brief, the present system of education saps vitality any produces inaction And, what sort are the teachers also ? Who becomes teachers ? Those who have never performed any courageous deed in their life Those that lack deserts become teachers This too will have to be changed

Three Main Considerations

We ought to do three things (1) We should free ourselves from the lure of English We do not oppose the knowledge of English as such what is being objected to is its imposition (2) Interest should be developed for manual labour (3) Learning and working with initiative should go together

Such is the concept of education in *Sarvodaya* This would come into practice, only when the concept of private ownership will be banished, from this great land of India So long as the idea of ownership remains, class distinctions will persist If the present system of education is not changed, it will continue to be in the hands of the upper classes And, education will be set right only when ownership is done away with Therefore, *Sarvodaya* tries to bring about social revolution simultaneously as it plans changes in education *Bhoodan*, *Gramdan*, Village Industries—all these are meant for changing the pattern of society If we change the pattern of society from one end and the pattern of education from the other, we shall be able to complete the work of *Sarvodaya* [18]

THE MISSION OF HINDI

When children came to me to learn Sanskrit, I taught them the *Gita* and the *Upanishad* Bharatan Kumarappa once

approached me in the jail for learning Hindi He had been told that it is not easy to draw out Vinoba but if someone went to him to learn he will be ready to talk and teach We started with *Tulsi-Ramayan* Bharatan realised that this man (Vinoba) is full of love and knowledge, only he has to be properly approached When I myself started learning Oriya, I began with the *Bhagwat*, and while learning Tamil I commenced my studies with *Tiruvachakam*, the best book in Tamil When I learn any language I study in it my own favourite branch of knowledge so that it may help me develop spiritual power

Vivekanand was once asked about the way to spread *Vedant* His reply was that this could be done by teaching Sanskrit These days Sanskrit is taught in the Colleges, yet *Vedant* is not spreading, because neither the *Upanishads* nor the *Brahmasutra* are taught there they teach, the *Shakuntala* and the *Kumarsambhava* Does any modern language lack in such latter type of books ? Sanskrit is not meant for teaching such books, it is meant for teaching *Vedanta* Whatever Sanskrit I have learnt it is all Philosophy If those teaching Hindi confine themselves only to imparting a comparative knowledge of the poet and the language, they may be rendering some service, but I believe that if someone has a special responsibility to spread the ideas of Sarvodaya, it is the Hindi-teachers

Vehicle of Sarvodaya

Just as Swami Vivekanand had said that if you want to spread *Vedant* teach Sanskrit, I would say that if you wish to spread Sarvodaya, learn Hindi Sanskrit has acquired the prestigs of vedantic philosophy Today Sanskrit is learnt in various parts of the world because it is full of knowledge of the self Similarly if Hindi becomes an instrument for propagating the Sarvodaya ideology, Hindi, like Sanskrit, will also spread throughout the world Hindi too will then come to acquire prestige like Sanskrit You can thus accomplish a great liberating task and become its pioneers Otherwise, if you were merely to teach Hindi somehow or the other, you may be doing a little service and may earn some money for yourself but it will not enhance the prestige of Hindi If, Hindi becomes the vehicle of Sarvodaya thought, as Sanskrit is that of spiritual knowledge, Hindi will encounter no difficulty People will then

learn Hindi for Sarvodaya as they do Sanskrit for spiritual knowledge [19]

For the last six and a half years that I have been on the Bhoodan Padayatra, I have delivered all my speeches in Hindi except at Hyderabad, Calicut and Bangalore I walked in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, which were Hindi-speaking areas But (through my speeches) I have been spreading the knowledge of Hindi in such non-Hindi speaking areas as Bengal, Orissa, Andhra, Tamilnad, Kerala and Karnatak.

The Main Task

But this is not my primary work There are many other works of social reform like the removal of communalism, Harijan-uplift, establishment of peace, women-welfare, etc , (in which I am interested) but all these are secondary My main work is to eradicate with love and understanding the roots of ownership which have become deeply entrenched in society Spirituality admits of no ownership It proclaims 'non-attachment' Now, science also stands against private ownership In this scientific age man does not produce wealth by himself, it is produced by the combined efforts of thousands It has, then, to be equitably distributed And, a village will also grow when the combined strength of all is directed to that end So, it is necessary to combine spirituality with science and to substitute 'we' and 'ours' for 'I' and 'mine'

If we think a little deeper, this should also be the aim of the work or Hindi propagation The heart of India is one To enable the different strata of society to experience this common feeling of oneness should be our aim We want to make all one with love [20]

APPEAL TO NORTHERN PEOPLE

I wish to suggest that those living in north India should learn a south Indian language We have just heard a religious song Those present here hailing from the north may not have followed the meaning of the song but have certainly liked its tune Languages are so full of sweetness ! North Indians should start learning a south Indian language If they do not have much time, let them give only 15 minutes every day for this work It will be

a good recreation—and good work too

Learn a South Indian Language

Even as a pastime or recreation, let our north Indian brothers and sisters learn one of the south Indian languages This will prove advantageous to them, and, as it will be learnt as a pastime, it will not at all be burdensome Then you will not miss it even for a day—for, don't we need some pastime or recreation every day ? Hence, there will be regularity The results, however, shall be sweeter than recreation

Indian civilization has been proclaiming for centuries that north and south India are together one composite whole. This composite oneness is reflected in our plan of pilgrimages Those in the south visit Kashi and those from the north go to Rameshwaram But these pilgrimages now have lost much of their charm and utility because these days one can fly from the north to the south and back home in six hours Such flights cannot make north and south into one In the past one took about six months to complete the pilgrimage One had then to learn the languages of the different areas through which one passed While passing through, say, the Kannad area, at least three words had to be learnt—*Beku* (बेकु, —I need), *Haku* (हाकु,—yes, serve) and *Saku* ('साकु'—that will do) How otherwise could one get food if one was ignorant of these words ? The pilgrims had thus to learn some words at least of other languages But now-a-day one can return without learning anything Such travels cannot unite the two parts. Henee, start learning at least one of these languages

Beauties of the South

In the south we have four beautiful languages We have thus a four-sided beauty Malayalam is sweet It has simple verbs and conjugations. *Poyee* (पोयी,) means went. I went, we went, she went, he went, all went—for all these constructions there is the same simple form *poyee*. The entire past tense is over in *poyee* If, however, we start learning Marathi or Gujarati we find different forms in the first, second and third persons; different forms, again, in singular and plural and yet different forms for the masculine and the feminine genders Thus, the poor past tense has to assume 15 or 20 forms But in Malayalam the whole thing is over in *poyee*, Similarly, the entire present tense is finished in one word

pokannu (पोकन्नु,) I go, she goes and all such other forms And the future tense is completed in *pokum* (पोकुम) All the three tenses in just three words What simplicity !

Tamil is full of ancient literature No other current Indian language, except, perhaps, Sanskrit, possesses such vast literature Tamil should be learnt with this end in view Perhaps Kannad is the easiest language to learn for those in north India—more so, for those speaking Marathi or Gujrati The technical terms used in Kannad are also current in Marathi and Gujarati Hence, we do not have to learn them It is thus easy to learn Kannad Telugu's characteristic feature is that it combines the pronunciations of the north and the south In the north we utter *choon, choon, choon* (चूँ चूँ चूँ,) to express the voice of the birds In Marwari we come across many such dental and nasal letters—for example, *chanval randhya* (चावल राध्या—rice cooked) All such pronunciations are there in Telugu also Telgu is sweet like the music of birds, One does not feel while hearing Telugu that it is human beings who are speaking It appears as if birds are singing *Main dekh raha hun* ('मैं देख रहा हूँ''—I am seeing)—how harsh it is in Hindi ! But we will say this in Telugu—nanu choo chu chunnanu (नानु चू चु चुन्नानु) Aren't you reminded of a bird on hearing this ? For experiencing such joy one may learn Telugu Hence, one may learn any language which appeals to his taste—but one must learn at least one of the southern languages

Thus, if those in north India will learn a language of the south it will be very helpful and it will also consolidate our unity If this is not done, things are not likely to be easy I would like those in the south to learn Hindi But I cannot understand the northerners not doing anything for their love of the south So, let all the workers commence it for pleasure If we shall try to learn one another's language, our angularities will be rounded and our good qualities developed ![21]

THE QUESTION OF SCRIPT

We have agreed that our common link language Hindi will be written in Nagri Script We should consider the extension of this script to our other national languages also This would not mean that the present scripts in which those languages are written would be discarded Both the scripts, the present one and Nagri, will be

used The very reasons which are behind the acceptance of Hindi as the common language are valid for making Nagri the common script.

Nagri and Roman

Some people are advocating the use of Roman as the common script I have given serious and objective consideration to this question Roman has undoubtedly many qualities But it is equally true that it has many short-comings also And these shortcomings are so serious that a man like Bernard Shaw wanted a new script to be evolved for the English language He even set apart a sum from his estate for this purpose I saw a specimen in the London "Times" of the script which was suggested in response of Bernard Shaw's desire And, I found that the script which was suggested had no affinity with Roman, but an attempt had been made to incorporate some of the qualities of Nagri into it While this is so, people here are suggesting the introduction of the Roman script for Indian languages

No Postponement till Reform

I do not mean to say that the Nagri script is perfect, or that there is no room for improvement in it I count myself among those who think that some reform is needed in Nagri, and many people are already aware of the reformed script called 'Lok-Nagri' which stands in my name The weekly 'Bhoodan-Yajna' (Hindi) always carries a column in that script However, I do not believe that Nagri as it stands today can not and should not be used for our languages On the contrary, I sense danger in the argument that Nagri should be adopted for our languages only after the necessary reforms have been carried out in it It is my considered opinion that Nagri in its present from can and should be adopted for Indian languages My book 'Gita-Pravachan' has accordingly been printed in the Nagri script in many languages. Experience shows that we can easily learn many languages by making use of these books.

Prospect of Becoming an Asian Script

I see the possibility of Nagri being adopted outside India also if we start using it for our languages For example, during my Bhoodan Padayatra, I started learning Japanese and I found that

the construction of that language is similar to that of Indian languages The people of Japan are looking out for a new script because their script is made up numerous pictures and is not suited for wide use Under these circumstances if we adopt Nagri as the common script in our country there is a possibility of its adoption in Japan also The same is applicable to the Chinese language Thus Nagri stands a good chance of becoming the common script of East Asia However, whether it covers such a wide area or not, even it becomes current throughout India it would serve a great purpose [22]

I wish that all the Indian scrips namely Kannada, Tamil, Bengali etc, should flourish But, in addition, I want that all Indian languages should be written in *Nagri* script also This will have many advantages It will be greatly helpful to us in learning each other's language Even today many languages are written in Nagri Considerable literature in Sanskrit, Pali and Ardh-Nagri is in Nagri Script Besides, two important languages like Hindi and Marathi are written in Nagri Nepali languages is also written in the same script The Gujarati script is also a form of Nagri There is a difference in the construction of only three or four letters If these are changed it will become Nagri

Urdu also in Nagri Script

If all the languages of India are written in Nagri it would be greatly conducive to our unity Not only this, ultimately the Chinese and Japrnese languages could also be brought within the orbit of Nagri I have made some study of Chinese and Japanese also, and I have come to realise that the construction of these languages is similar to that of ours Hence we can write them in Nagri and bring their literature in that script If Urdu is also written in Nagri, in addition to the Urdu script, it would be all the more advantageous If those knowing only Hindi thus begin to read good Urdu books, many good words of Urdu will be drawn into the vocabulary of Hindi If Urdu is written only in Urdu script and Hindi in Nagri, then those knowing Hindi will not read much of Urdu In that case Hindi will not be enriched by good Urdu words and will continue to be loaded by Sanskrit Hence it is very important that Urdu should be written in Nagri also, so that the process of mutual enrichment between Hindi and Urdu could go on Gradually some simple Sanskrit words will also be

absorbed in Urdu Thus, Hindi and Urdu will come closer[23]

Need for a Common Script

Today one has to learn a different script for each language It would have been much better if we had one script for all Indian languages, just as there is one script in Europe for different languages This does not mean that we should give up the present scripts Both the present script and Nagri, may be used At present for learning a (Indian) language other than our own we have to learn its script also If there were a common script we would not have had this difficulty Lokmanya Tilak wrote the *Gita Rahasaya* in 1915 while he was in Mandalay jail But the Malayali translation of this book was published only in 1956 The original book is 'Marathi' but the translation in Malayalam was prepared from the Bengali translation of the original and that too after 41 years ! If there was a common script perhaps the situation would have been different Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati and Nepali are already using the Nagri Script. If the southern languages were also written in Nagri, one could learn them in fifteen days, and *vice versa*

How to make a beginning ? We could start by using the Nagri script in our correspondence Friends should write to each other in that script. I get letters from Bengali, Kannada, Tamil and Telugu friends If they all write to me in Nagri script I would have no difficulty If others also adopt this practice the idea will spread in no time To have one common script for the various languages is as important as having a national languages[24]

SOME QUESTIONS

Language Meant to Serve

Question · We find that some Hindi supporters are rather fanatic They wish to make Hindi the language which would now govern as English used to do in the past What is your opinion about it ?

Vinoba : In future, a language will not be meant to rule but to serve. In India we should do away with politics and establish *Lokniti* instead. Hence, language will in future be needed for cultural development and not for goverence English can never serve that purpose. If English had to be retained, why did we ask the English to quit ? Thus, in our country language will be meant to serve and

to promote culture This task will be performed by the regional languages in their respective areas and by Hindi throughout the country

Will Hindi Dominate ?

Question Will Hindi dominate over the mother-tongue ?

Vinoba Hindi can never dominate over the mother-tongue It is English which does so I have myself seen this I was in Vellur prison Only person with Telugu, Malayalam, Tamil or Kannad as their mother-tongue were there I started learning all the four languages immediately on entering the Jail But those persons used to talk amongst themselves in English Those with the same mother-tongue also used to talk in English When such was the plight, it was too much to expect them to learn one another's language. It was a very sad state of affairs, indeed ! They had no other medium than English Thus, due to the dominance of English, people do not learn even their mother-tongue properly English has eaten up a lot of our energy ! No, Hindi can not dominate over your language, you can dominate over Hindi You say 'vo dekha (वो देखा) for 'usne dekha' (उसने देखा) and 'usne gaya' (उसने गाया) like 'usne dekha (उसने देखा). But even this will be considered to be Hindi Such forms will crop up in Hindi Hindi will adopt the style of your language My mother-tongue is Marathi yet I speak Hindi Often Marathi construction creeps into my Hindi sometimes even Marathi words find their way Yet, I have been awarded a prize in Hindi People designate it as Vinoba's style Similarly, Hindi can assimilate your phraseology and construction That may produce yet another style Hindi is an ocean where many rivers are to meet You may thus dominate over Hindi it is willing to tolerate This is Hindi's virtue That which can assimilate all can alone become the national language. Sardar Vallabhbhai's Hindi was mixed with Gujarati And, what was Gandhi's Hindi ? Morever, who encoraged the use of Hindi and propagated it ? It was Swami Dayanand He hailed from Kathiawar. His was *Kathiawari* Hindi. But even this Hindi is liked by the Aryasamajists, who specify it as his style Hindi thus agrees to bear it all You go to the north and speak in Hindi—no one will object to your Hindi But if I were to speak in Kannad here will you tolerate my Kannad ? No, you will all begin to laugh But Hindi will tolerate *your* Hindi.

Thus Hindi will be quite inclusive in her form Your apprehension that Hindi will subdue your languages and will rule over you is just a reaction—a reaction because English was overbearing I know that some Hindi-protagonsits are a little fanatic But, you know, that the world is made up of all sorts. Let them also remember that the objective cannot be attained by showing such a spirit [25]

I Have Compelled Myself

Question You are compelling those in the south to learn Hindi—have you similarly compelled anyone from the north to learn a south Indian language ?

Vinoba I am from the north When I entered the Vellore prison—and it was 4 A M then—the jail authorities came to me and asked me about my requirements I told them that I needed two things I needed, first, a barber to shave my over-grown beard, and secondly, I wanted a teacher to teach me Tamil I got shaved, took my bath and before taking any breakfast I started learning Tamil You ask me whether I have compelled any northerner to learn a south Indian language and my reply is that I compelled myself to do so [26]

Notes and References

1 Speech at Shikagpur, Shimoga (Mysore), 1 1 58
2 Malappuram, Kozikode (Kerala), 27 6.57
3 Shikagpur, Shimoga (Mysore), 1 1 58
4 Tumkur (Mysore), 19 10 57
5 Speech at Hubli, Dharwad (Mysore), 27 1.58
6 Wardha (Maharashtra), 5 11 64
7 Chennapattan, Bangalore (Mysore), 9 10 57
8 Birdi, Bangalore (Mysore), 11 10 56
9 Gokarna, Karwar (Mysore), 12 2 58
10 Chennapattan (Mysore), 9 10 57
11 Mysore (Karnatak), 28 9 57
12. Kumatha, Karwar (Mysore), 14 2 58.
13 Kumatha, Karwar (Mysore), 14 2 58
14 Manaparai, Trichi (Madras), 12 1 57
15 Mysore (Karnatak), 28 9 57
16 Manaparai, Trichi (Madras), 12 1 57
17 Lagda, Manbhum (Bihar), 18 3 63
18 Manaparai, Trichi (Madras), 12 1 57
19. Hubli, Dharwar (Mysore), 28 1 58,

20 Tumkur (Mysore), 19 10 57
21 Arsikere, Hasan (Mysore), 9 11 57
22 Bhoodan Yagna' (Hindi Weekly)—3 11 61
23 Chennapattan, Bangalore (Mysore)—9 10 57
24 Malappuram, Kozikode (Kerala)—27 6 57
25 Tumkur, (Mysore)—19 10 57
26 Bangalore (Mysore)—19 10 57

APPENDIX I

[Languages specified in the Eighth Schedule of Indian Constitution]

(Articles 344 (1) and 351)

1 Assamese 2. Bengali 3. Gujarati 4 Hindi 5 Kannada 6 Kashmiri 7 Malayalam 8 Marathi 9 Oriya 10 Punjabi 11 Sanskrit 12 Tamil 13 Telugu 14 Urdu

APPENDIX II

Distribution of Languages

(According to Census of India 1961)

(1)	Hindi	13,34,35,360
(2)	Urdu	2,23,23,518
(3)	Telugu	3,76,68,132
(4)	Bengali	3,38,88,399
(5)	Marathi	3,32,86,771
(6)	Tamil	3,05,62,698
(7)	Gujarati	2,03,04,464
(8)	Kannada	1,74,15,827
(9)	Malayalam	1,70,15,782
(10)	Oriya	1,57,19,398
(11)	Punjabi	1,09,50,826
(12)	Assamese	68,03,465
(13)	Kashmiri	19,56,115
(14)	Sanskrit	2,544
(15)	Other Languages	5,79,11,783

PART II

18

ONE WEEK WITH VINOBA

SHRIMAN NARAYAN

I

ONCE AGAIN IN TELANGANA

It was on April 18 in the year 1951 that Acharya Vinoba Bhave received his first gift of land of one hundred acres in Pochampalli, a small village about thirty miles from Hyderabad Vinoba had no pre-meditated plan for this Bhoodan movement In fact, he had hardly any idea that people could be persuaded to donate thousands of acres of land just for the asking As he entered there Pochampalli village, he was surrounded by a number of Harijans, the poorest among the local people, who begged to him to arrange for them some plots of land on which they could work and earn their bread in the sweat of their brow Vinoba did not know what to do He told them that he had no land in his possession, but would try to contact the Government and find out whether there was any possibility of arranging for the grant of some land to them But, then, an idea crossed Vinoba's mind India has attained her political freedom through peace and non-violence She may also show to the world a way of achieving economic freedom through the same means. Re-distribution of land is one of our basic economic problems Can this problem not be solved in the Gandian way ? Why not ask the people of the village whether any one of them could donate the land required by these poor Harijans ? And so, though not with much hope,

Vinoba asked the villagers who were squatting before him "These Harijans of your village are in need of some land on which they could earn their livelihood through hard and honest work Is there nobody amongst you who would like to donate the necessary land to them ?" The whole crowd was astonished when one man, Ramachandra Reddy, suddenly stood up with folded hands and said "Yes, Sir, I donate hundred acres for these people My father had left two hundred acres of land some years ago I have been thinking of giving away half of this inherited land to a deserving person I had been waiting for a suitable opportunity all the time It is God's grace that a golden opportunity has come to me today Therefore, please do not refuse this donation of mine " Vinoba was overwhelmed with emotion He saw the hand of Divinity in this incident The spirit of Gandhi has showing the non-violent way of solving the difficult problem of land re-distribution in India

The Harijans also could not grasp the full significance of Ramachandra Reddy's declaration The incident appeared to be too good to be true But Vinoba quietly asked them "How much land do you require for your own cultivation ?" There were about forty Harijan families in the village The heads of these families conferred amongst themselves for a while, and then told Vinoba "Sir, eighty acres will be quite sufficient for us Each family will take two acres for personal cultivation We do not require any more " Vinoba was again over-powered with emotion These poor people most probably knew that hundred acres had been donated by Ramachandra Reddy But they would not be greedy and ask of more than what they actually required Vinoba asked them whether they would agree to cultivate these hundred acres on a co-operative basis They readily agreed And so, Vinoba received the new light on that day and the great and noble Bhoodan Yagna was born in such humble surroundings and circumstances

From that day Vinoba began to ask for land donations wherever he went and the people responded to his call wonderfully well He collected about twelve thousand acres in Telangana at a time when the whole area was infested with Communists as well as the military The Government of India was deeply worried about the anarchic conditions that prevailed in Telangana at that time The Communists were asking people to take possession

of the land by force and violence A number of murders had taken place The police and the military were trying to restore peace in the area, but with much success The people were between the devil and the deep sea During the nights, they were harassed by the Communists, and during the day the police and the soldiers would harass them in the process of chasing the Communists, Vinoba's Bhoodan movement gave a ray of hope and a new faith to the people In place of hatred and violence, they began to realise the value of love and mutual aid Instead of using coercion and forceful dispossession, they saw with their own eyes the inspiring sight of the conversion of hearts through a process of moral and spiritual revolution Thus Vinoba, with his noble and peaceful mission of Bhoodan in Telangana, could do what the police and the military failed to achieve. Prime Minister Nehru declared in the Indian Parliament that "this frail person" had been of immense help in restoring peace to the disturbed areas in Telangana

Since then, Vinobaji has been walking from village to village to ask for land donations for distribution among the landless people He has so far trvelled about fifteen thousand miles covering many areas in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Andhra After about four years, he once again entered Telangana towards the end of December 1955. He reached the Pochampalli village on 30th January 1956, eighth death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi By that date, he had received about 4 2 million acres of land including a number of whole villages all their plots of land, big and small But Vinoba was not Jubilant over this success In his post-prayer meeting he pleaded for self-introspection He was deeply worried over certain violent disorders in the country in connection with the Reorganisation of States He declared in the meeting that Bhoodan had failed to achieve its real objective His basic aim was not merely to collect land for the landless labourers but to create a new faith in the efficacy of non-violence as an instrument for solving tough problems in a peaceful way Even in States like Bihar and Orissa where Vinoba had received several lakhs of acres of land in Bhoodan, there were outbursts of violence This had pained Vinoba deeply He told the gathering in Pochampalli that if the people did not grasp the true significance of Bhoodan, our political independence would be in danger.

A few days later, Vinoba wrote to me about his mental agony in regard to the recent disturbances connected with linguistic reorganisation of Indian territories, He stated "I have ceased to worry about the targets of land collections, but I have not been able to get over my anguish relating to the outbreaks of violence in certain parts of the country " He desired that I should go to him to talk over various points. I readily decided to spend one full week with him this time I had been with Vinobaji in his Bhoodan tours off and on during the last four years But his general complaint has been that people go to him with "return tickets" in their pockets I had also been no exception to this impertinence So I reached Vinoba's camp in a small village in the Mahboobnagar district of Telangana, Hyderabad State, in the afternoon of 28th February and toured with him on foot for one week I had the opportunity of talking with him at length on a number of subjects during the morning walks and also at several intervals during the day I had also the privilege of being present at the talks which Prime Minister Nehru had with Vinobaji on the 6th March at Madhoraopalli village, about hundred miles from Hyderabad This one week with Vinoba was, indeed, a great education for me Incidentally, it was also a great relief and a most welcome change after a hectic period of several months in Delhi After the publication of the Report of the States Re-organisation Commission early in October 1955, most of us in Delhi had to undergo a period of mental and even "spiritual" anguish in addition to great physical strain

II

A "MOBILE UNIVERSITY"

No one can fail to be deeply impressed by the fresh, original and rational approach of Vinobaji to almost all the important problems that face the world today Although he has been on a walking tour in some of the most interior part of the country, away from the din and turmoil of the cities, Vinoba manages to keep himself fully abreast of current problems through newspapers, Far from being a "back number," he thinks in terms of the future in a perfectly scientific manner In his student days, Vinoba was a keen mathematician and continues to be so in all his thinking There is no vagueness about his ideas, he is as clear as crystal and

as refreshing as the morning breeze. Besides his deep learning and versatile thinking, Vinoba has a vision a mission which cannot but inspire those who go to meet him and talk to him He is also a great linguist who has mastered almost all the modern languages of India, more specially the Southern languages which are of Dravidian origin He likes to recite his prayers in the language of the region with a faultless pronunciation During his tour of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, he used to recite the verses of the Gita in Hindi In Bengal, Orissa and Andhra-Telangana, he recited them in Bengali, Oriya and Telugu He also knows several foreign languages including English, French and Japanese He has mastered both Sanskrit and Arabic. His explanation for this wonderful capacity to learn many languages is that he had the opportunity of mastering his own mother tongue, Marathi He believes that if a person learns one language fully well with its grammar and diction, it would be easy for him to pick up a working knowledge of other languages within a few days.

Vinoba does not believe in listless and cursory reading Whatever book he takes up he reads and studies with thoroughness and even devotion His study of the Gita, the Upanishads, the Ramayan and the Holy Koran is very deep, indeed. Of course, he is well-versed in almost all the religions of the world His "Discourses on the Gita " (*"Gita Pravachan"*) which he delivered to his friends in jail about thirty years ago have been published in several languages of India and a few lakh copies of the book have been sold so far after his post-prayer meetings Vinobaji attaches so much value to this publication that he agrees to autograph all the copies purchased every evening He feels that a thorough study of the Gita would be helpful in developing all the aspects of one's personality The way in which he has been explaining the full implications of the Bhoodan movement to the people during the last four or five years is, indeed, remarkable. His post-prayer speech day is full of new ideas, illustrations and points of view. While elucidating his ideas on Bhoodan, Vinoba has been dealing with all the subjects that one can think of He is a born teacher and loves his job almost passionately He is never so happy and in his true elements as while teaching children, or explaining a new point of view to his audience.

Vinoba gets up early in the morning at 2-30 a m After his routine duties, he sits down for spinning. While spinning he also does most of his thinking for the day. At 3-30 a.m. the members

Though Vinoba may sometimes be critical of Nehru's views on economic matters he has great faith in Nehru's transparent sincerity and passion for truth and discovery Nehru and Vinoba are, undoubtedly the two foremost disciples of the great Master, complementing and supplementing each other Nehru has shown a new and glorious path of international good-will and cooperation in the direction of *Panch Shila*, Vinoba has carved out a non-violent and *Sarvodaya* way for solving a very difficult economic problem like that of land re-distribution

In the course of his post-prayer speeches during my stay for a week in Telangana, Vinobaji told the villagers how they should try to develop their local institutions like the Panchayats as basic units of self-government He reminded them that after the achievement of Swaraj they were now the real masters of the country and the Ministers and Members of Parliament and the State Legislatures were their servants in the right sense of the term They should, therefore, learn to understand their own good and direct their representatives accordingly Vinoba also drew the attention of the people to the fact that Bhoodan was not merely the physical redistribution of land but also the creation of new values in life. In place of greed, exploitation and possessiveness, Bhoodan Yagna was teaching the general people the values of mutual help, co-operation, and self-surrender. Vinoba is now not satisfied with the donation of one-sixth of one's land or property; he desires that a person should surrender his or her all to the community and, then, thankfully accept from the community whatever is given back to him or her for minimum physical requirements In place of "Dan" or donations, Vinobaji now uses the term "*Samarpan*" or surrender

While Vinobaji walks through the village, the people stand on both sides of the road with perfect discipline, singing hymns and songs and reciting Vedic mantras Vinoba does not like persons touching his feet, nor does he want people to waste their and his time in putting garlands arounds his neck He directs them to give flowers and garlands into his hands Sometimes he humourously asks the people to garland themselves on his behalf and then walks along Bhajan and Kirtan troupes in the villages follow him for some time singing melodious songs to the accompaniment of rural musical instruments. Simple but artistic arches of green leaves and colourful flowers are erected to welcome

Vinoba with real warmth and respect

The great Acharya never misses an opportunity to drive home some moral idea into the minds of the people In one of the village camps, the people came forward to greet him with *Deepaks* or lamps with wicks and indigenous oil "Do you know why the lamps has four or five wicks arranged in one artistic pattern?" He paused for a while and then himself answered in a serious tone · "In India the Panchayats have been regarded as the representatives of God himself But this could be true only if the Panchas work in harmony and in a team spirit Just as the five wicks in the lamps give light and inspiration to us in a steady manner, so could the village communities be a source of social welfare and prosperity only if they work together in mutual aid and cooperation !" There is a new slogan which Vinoba has recently given to the villagers "*Ek-bano, Nek bano*" or "Be united, be good !" This slogan is, indeed, the key to the lasting progress of our people not only in the countryside but also in the cities

As Vinobaji reached a village after his morning walk, he was presented a guard of honour by the local students who were in Scout uniform with staves in their hands. Vinoba asked the boys "What is the use of these staves ?" The students did not know what to say "Our teacher has asked us to keep them," was their routine reply Vinoba would not rest content with that unintelligent reply He said "You should ask your teacher about the utility of the staff I do not see any useful purpose in keeping it In times of foreign rule people were asked to keep these sticks to threaten and beat others But now they can serve no purpose in raising the standard of living of the people Is it not better for you to keep brooms in place of the staves ? The brooms could be used for cleaning your own house as well as the surroundings Is it not so ?" The boys as well as the elders who surrounded Vinobaji quietly nodded assent Whether they were fully convinced or not the main point Vinoba utilised the opportunity to teach the villagers a lesson in sanitation and in the futility of violence in a free and democratic country

This is how Vinobaji moves from village to village imparting education to the people in a natural and practical manner To the children of the villages he imparts ideal Basic Education, to the adults a sound social education and to the visitors, both Indian

and foreign, learned and original ideas on a variety of subjects This "Mobile University," that Acharya Vinoba is, has been attracting a number of foreign students from America, United Kingdom, France, Japan and other Western as well as Far Eastern countries Recently, some person from the Soviet Union also visited Vinoba and took some photographs of various aspects of the Bhoodan movement. All these foreign visitors are naturally attracted to this unique way of solving difficult economic problems through love, persuasion and conversion of hearts and minds and not through class-conflict, coercion and even compulsion through legislation Prime Minlster Nehru is teaching to the world the principles of Panch Shila in international affairs, Vinoba is showing to the countries of the world the practical application of Panch Shila in the social and economic spheres

III

"GRAMDAN"—THE GREAT REVOLUTION

In the beginning of the Bhoodan movement, Vinobaji asked only for the donation of one-sixth of one's land to the landless labourers of the village. "If you have five sons, regard me as your sixth," said Vinoba to the villagers But some villages in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar agreed to donate all their plots of land, big and small to Vinoba for re-distribution among the people This new phase of the Bhoodan movement which is called "*Gramdan*" received great stimulus in Orissa, more specially in the Koraput district, where more than nine hundred whole villages have so far been donated to Vinobaji Gramdan movement is, indeed, one of the greatest revolutions that the world has seen in the course of its history Vinobaji himself regards it as "a great land-mark" and "the last lap" in the march of Bhoodan Yajna Imagine all the agriculturists of a village donating all their lands to Bhoodan in a spirit of self-sacrifice and mutual co-operation and then receiving back plots of land in proportion to the number of members in their family Could there be a greater revolution than this wonderful convesion of human minds and hearts ? The people in general have a great attachment for land and do not mind spending their all for safeguarding their rights in the courts But an appeal to their good sense by a noble saint makes them part

with all their land in the village and receive with good grace and in all love only a few acres which would be necessary for the maintenance of their family according to its size In one of the Gramdan villages in Koraput, a man who had owned 24 acres before, got only 3½ acres at the time of re-distribution, while a person possessing no land at all received 5 acres because of a larger number of members in his family And the beauty of it all is that the owner of 24 acres receives 3½ acres at the hands of Vinobaji with great thankfulness and in a prayerful spirit

During my tour with Vinobaji in Telangana, Shri Annasaheb Sahasrabudhe who is in charge of the intensive scheme in Koraput, came to discuss various problems connected with the development of Gramdan villages According to the present scheme, Gramdan lands are re-distributed to the villagers according to the size of their families at the rate of one acre for each member of the family, in general Conditions, of course, would vary to some extent from village to village The families are allowed to cultivate the land and also pass them on to the next generation so long as the rents are paid to the Gram Panchayat or Sabha If the lands are left uncultivated by any family, they revert to the village community The plots of land re-distributed to the people cannot be sold or transferred Any such re-arrangement could take place only with the sanction of the Gram Sabha One tenth of the land donated in ' Gramdan" villages is reserved for common cultivation on a co-operative basis The proceeds out of this common land are to be used for paying the expensce on community services like the Panchayat administration, village school, maternity homes, sanitation, cultural activities and village festivals Holders of smaller plots of land could also practise co-operative methods in farming, harvesting, irrigational facilities, marketing, etc

Vinobaji is very keen that the Gramdan villages should now begin to lead a new kind of life The re-distribution of land should lead to the establishment of new values of life During discussions with Annasaheb, Vinobaji laid special emphasis on four aspects of rural reconstruction 1. Equitable re-distribution of land and co-operative farming, 2 Development of village industries, 3 Introduction of Basic Education and 4 Planning of village health on the basis of indigenous systems and local herbs There are, of course, many other items of constructive work which will have to be undertaken in the villages But Bhoodan, village

industries, Basic education and health are the four key-stones on which the edifice of our rural reconstruction would ultimately rest Vinobaji is also very keen that village people should be allowed to develop the necessary initiative and self-confidence to plan out their development themselves The State would surely assist them in their endeavours But there must be a devolution of economic and political power on a very wide scale If we try to direct all our planning from Delhi or Lucknow or Madras without taking the village communities into full confidence we shall set up a bureaucratic machine which would grind us down with its wheels of centralised authority If we desire to establish true Ramraj in India, Vinobaji maintains, we must take the necessary steps to bring about *Gramraj* or the government of the Village Communities, Says Vinobaji "To the extent that power changes hands from the Government to the people, Ahimsa or non-violence will grow and the power of the State will gradually diminish and ultimately disappear" That is why Vinobaji advocates the solution of the land problem in India through Bhoodan Yajna and not through State legislation "The Government", observes Vinoba, "might be capable of capturing anything but never the hearts of the people"

To look at the Government for everything is, indeed, highly dangerous Vinoba compares the State to a bucket and the people to the well The bucket can take only a small quantity of water from the well Similarly, the Government has in its possession only a small portion of the capacity which the people possess. "I have often said that the power of the Government is similar to that of a zero, and the power of the people is like that of the digit '1' When the two are joined together, we get the figure of 10 Thus, when the power of the people and that of the State are joined together, a great power is developed. But when we value either of them separately, the people only will be found to have the value of '1' and the Government that of the Zero only"

In the Gramdan compact area of Koraput district, Vinoda would very much welcome the co-operation of the State and Central Governments In fact, such co-operation has been forthcoming in ample measure But he would never allow us to forget even for a single moment that we have to plan from the bottom The people must be the makers of their own destiny In the intensive development schemes, the Sarva Seva Sangh under

the guidance of Vinoba has been devoting special attention to the problems of cheaper co-operative credit for agricultural improvements A very high priority is being given to the bunding of brooks and rivulets for improving minor irrigational facilities Animal husbandry for the supply of strong bullocks for farming has also been engaging the attention of the Sarvodaya planners in Koraput The establishment of Co-operative Stores for the supply of village industry products has been one of the very first steps towards Gramraj in the area. The results of such decentralised planning on Gandhian lines will, undoubtedly, be watched with great interest not only in India but even outside.

IV

BHOODAN AND STATES REORGANISATION

During my talks I found that Vinoba was very much worried about the violence and civil disorder that broke out in some parts of the conntry in relation to the Reorganisation of States He openly confessed that these outbursts of violence showed that his mission of Bhoodan had proved to be a failure Although he had succeeded in collecting a very large quantity of land it had not been possible for him to generate a genuine spirit of non-violence in the country When lakhs of donors, big and small, had given away substantial portions of the land in Bhoodan Yagna, why should people try to break one another's heads in deciding whether a city or a taluka or a district should remain in one State or merge with a neighbouring State? This indicates that although we talk of non-violence, we have not yet been able to imbibe the true spirit of Ahimsa According to Vinobaji, the Bhoodan movement is essentially an experiment in the non-violent way of brining about radical social and economic reforms If therefore, there are outbursts of violence in spite of Bhoodan, it indicates the failure of the Bhoodan Yagna to that extent

Analysis the basic causes of such violent up-heavals, Vinobaji thought that there was some fundamental confusion about the efficacy of violence and non-violence in the minds of the people In India today it is generally agreed that there should not be any international conflict and that the mutual relations of different nations should be governed by the Five Principles of good

behaviour or Panch Shila They should be based on love, affection, and goodwill But it is yet not very clear in the minds of a number of people whether violence soould be completely eschewed in social or community behaviour In fact, the "open rebellion" of 1942 against the British rule and more particularly the role of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's Indian National Army, did create an impression in the country that political independence was conceded to India, partly at any rate, owing to the pressure of organised violence and sabotage The creation of the Andhara State almost immediately after a series of violent disorders following the death of Sriramulu also gave rise to an impression that in public life violence does pay It has been made repeatedly clear by our national leaders that the establishment of the new State of Andhra had nothing to do with the violent acts that preceded it At best, there might have been an unhappy coincidence But once a wrong impression gains wide currency it is very difficult to erase it from the minds of the general public. That is why, pointed out Vinobaji, people hang on their walls the photographs of both Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas Bose very often side by side They feel that at times non-violent resistance or Satyagraha pays and sometimes a certain amount of noise and violent demonstration is effective in winning the objective of a popular movement According to Vinoba, it is this basic confusion in public thinking which is mainly responsible for occasional outbursts of violence in some parts of the country

Vinoba feels, however, that there is a bright side to the picture also While in Europe, people of different countries have been fighting amongst themselves as separate nations, in India people indulge in such acts of violence without losing their basic idea of India's fundamental national unity There may be a few exceptions here and there But, by and large, the Indian people, despite great differences in language, scripts, social customs and manners, regard themselves as the sons of the same Motherland from Kashmir to the Cape and from Saurashtra to the easternmost parts of Assam Vinobaji, therefore, suggested that it may be worth-while calling a business-like conference of the representatives of all political parties in the country in order to arrive at a common agreement that whatever may be their political and ideological differences they must agree as a fundamental policy to abjure violence and civil disorder in their programmes. It is

absolutely necessary that all the parties in India agree to create public opinion for solving all disputes only through peaceful and democratic methods Without such a basic agreement, democracy in the India would surely have very little chance of success

Applying the principle of Bhoodan to a difficult problem of States Reorganisation like that of Bombay city, Vinobaji observed that the attitude of a true Satyagrahi should be that although he thought that Bombay should belong to Maharashtra, the final decision about this matter should be left to the Gujratis who constitute a substantial minority in the city of Bombay Bhoodan teaches us to be large-hearted and to be prepared a sacrifice for the satisfication of our neighbour it cannot tolerate mutual bitterness and a sense of imposition Vinobaji, therefore, preferred a bi-lingual State of Bombay where the Maharashtrians and the Gujratis could live together in amity and good-will as they have been doing for the last hundred and fifty years

Vinoba is not one of those who think that the Reorganisation of States on a linguistic basis has been a great and grievous mistake On the contrary, he is of the definite view that the States in India should be re-organised on the basis of language, because the people of a particular region or State have every right to carry on the administration in their own language and their children also have the birth-right to receive their education through the mother-tongue or the regional language The difficulty arises only when the people belonging to one language group develop a sense of hostility and ill-will towards another language group According to Vinobaji, such an attitude of bitterness and hostility is a perversity and surely deplorable But this should not mean the giving up of the formation of linguistic States altogether We should try to educate the people and make them understand the right perspective in this matter Even a good thing can be abused, but this should not mean that the good thing should be given up completely lest it should be abused by some Language should be a cementing force and not a cause for disruption and disunity Vinoba has studied and loves all the important languages in India and he cannot understand how people, while loving their own mother-tongue, can learn to hate the language of others.

V

BHOODAN AND BASIC EDUCATION

We had detailed talks for several days during the week on Basic education Dr K L Shrimali, Union Depnty Minister for Education, and Shrimati Ashadevi were also present during the discussions for some time Vinoba thought that the Bhoodan movement could be one of the most important basic activities for the purpose of correlating various subjects of study to the physical and social environment of the students Bhoodan touches the problems of land, food, village industries and economic values of life It can serve as an excellent medium of education for our children both in the villages and the cities Attempts should therefore, be made to weave basic education round the Bhoodan activities so that education may become more realistic and practical and the Bhoodan movement also may receive wider co-operation from the teachers and students According to Vinobaji, Basic education is not merely a new method of teaching, it is a new way of life based on a new set of social and economic values

Talking about the present teachers, Vinoba stated that it was very necessary to retain these teachers into the new system of Basic education If there are some teachers or educational officers who did not like *Nai Talim* and were opposed to its very ideology, it would be better for them to retire honourably and make room for others who are prepared to take up this work with full faith and determination These retired teachers may, of course, be given an adequate pension, but they should not be allowed to impede the spread of Basic education in the country

Vinobaji was very keen that the University degrees and other academic diplomas should not be regarded as essential for the purposes of recruitment to Government services. The Government should hold admission tests for various categories of services and throw open such competitive examinations to all candidates on the basis of their intrinstic merits and not on degrees Such a system would give a fair chance to the products of Basic education to establish their position by dint of their superior merit and practical experience I promised to take up this matter with the Ministry of Education which had already appointed a Committee to examine this question This Committee, presided over by Dr. Mudaliar,

has submitted its report in which they have agreed that University degrees should not be regarded as essential for government services except for the All India Administrative Service There are a few minutes of dissent even on the desirability of recognising the Degrees for the I A S recruitment

Discussing the place of English and other foreign languages in the system of Basic education, Vinobaji was of the opinion that during the basic stage, i e, from the ages of six to fourteen, the pupils should be imparted full knowledge of their mother-tongue, and English or any other foreign language should be taught at the post-basic stage. Striking a personal note, Vinoba explained that it had been possible for him to pick up a working knowledge of most of the Indian languages mainly because he had been able to master his own mother-tongue Marathi during his boyhood "Now that I know Marathi and its grammar and idiom very well, learning other languages is child's play to me", remarked Vinobaji He is, therefore, against the practice of teaching English at the Basic stage Of course, the national language Hindi should be taught to the pupils at the senior basic stage

Vinobaji made one novel suggestion In order to facilitate the learning of different Indian languages, the Government should recognise both the regional and Nagri scripts and publish as well as encourage private publishers to print school text-books in both the local and Nagri scripts This will naturally encourage children to learn their mother-tongue in the Devangri script, more specially when they have to learn Hindi as the national or the Union language Gradually a natural tendency will grow to use the Nagari script for all the Indian languages This will be a highly desirable tendency from the national point of view, it would make for enormous saving of unnecessary expenditure on printlng text-books and other literature in a dozen scripts It will also become much easier for children and even adults to learn various Indian languages if the hurdle of different scripts is removed Vinobaji suggested that a beginning in this direction may be made with the Kannada language which is much near Hindi in both its script and diction The practice of using the Nagari script for regional languages will be very useful in the Adivasi areas Children of these backward tribes will have to learn the regional as well as the national language and it would be much easier for them to learn both in the Nagari script

While discussing the criticism that Basic education was likely

to be costlier than ordinary elementary education, Vinobaji made it very clear that crafts should not be introduced in the Basic institutions in an artificial manner He went on to say that no craft which does not exist in a village should find a place in the Basic school of that village Every attempt should be made to utilise the local crafts for educational purposes The Government should not spend additional money on providing special craft workshops attached to the Basic schools The existing village with its normal craft should become the medium for teaching students various subjects like history, geograpy, mathematics, social and physical sciences, etc Vinobaji also pointed out that under the Second Five Year Plan and as an integral part of the Community Projects, the Government will be spending several hundred crores of rupees on the development of small scale, village and cottage industries It is necessary that this industrial development is correlated to the expansion of basic schools in both the cities and villages There should be no duplication of effort and every attempt should be made utilise the production-*cum*-training centres for village and cottage industries as the centres of productive and creative activity for Basic schools The buildings for basic institutions should be simple and artistic and local materials should be used to reduce the cost The villagers should be persuaded to donate land for the basic schools and the good atmosphere created by the Bhoodan movement should be utilised for making this appeal effective The land donated to the basic school should be used by teachers and the students for raising foodgrains, fruits and vegetables which could be consumed by the school community itself If the basic schools are organised in this manner, Vinobaji was sure that such institutions will not only impart much better education to our children but will also be much cheaper than other schools Of course, it must be understood that even ordinary schools, if improved, will have to be more costly At present, primary schools have low-paid teachers and dilapidated buildings with no equipment for scientific teaching These schools will have to be improved in any case and this will require additional expenditure But if these institutions are covered into basic schools, the additional expenditure will surely be much less than otherwise

During our talks, Vinobaji raised one more important though a rather controversial point According to him, general education

in a tropical country like India should be completed at the age of 18 After eight years of basic education, there should be four years of post-basic and University education more or less equivalent to the graduation stage Vinoba thinks that the average life in India as also the age of puberty and maturity is much lower than that in European countries We should, therefore, try to impart all the necessary education to our young boys and girls within twelve years While there is great force in Vinobaji's argument it is not possible to say with certainty whether the students will be mentally well-equipped at the age of 18 to grasp higher knowledge which is imparted to students in foreign countries from the age of eighteen upwards At any rate, the products of basic and post-basic education will be much more suitable for various governmental projects, specially in the rural areas, and they must be given perference over others while recruiting the requisite personnel for these projects

VI

THE GREATEST TRAGEDY

During one of our talks while walking in the morning, Vinobaji explained to me his approach towards village and cottage industries "Some people think that I am a faddist," remarked Vinobaji, "Apart from being a faddist, I claim to be an up-to-date scientist It is wrong to think that I do not favour the use of modern science for improving the techniques of village industries In fact, I think that modern science is not satisfactory and progressive enough For example, I do not see why our aeroplanes should not be more fast and more comfortable I generally prefer to walk on foot so that I may be able to maintain living contacts with the people and not talk in the air But if, for any reason, I have to fly, I would like to use an aeroplane which will take me to Delhi or London or New York within a few minutes "

Vinobaji lays great stress, as Gandhiji also did, on the village and cottage industries because he daily sees with his own eyes how our people in the rural areas have to waste their energies as they have no regular and whole-time work to do This unemployment and under-employment not only brings about physical

deterioration but also undermines their mental and moral capacities While touring in Bihar during the floods last year Vinobaji found to his sorrow that once the agricultural operations failed on account of excessive rains and floods, poor people in the villages had to sit idle with folded hands These people even in great economic and physical distress did not like to live on doles and gratuitous relief They always asked for some productive and remunerative work But, the unfortunate remains that there is hardly any work available to them except agriculture When agriculture fails, the whole village life falls According to Vinobaji, this is *the great tragedy* of our national economy One by one our village industries are dying out owing to competition from the mills Formerly there were millions of spinners and weavers and every cottage was a miniature textile mill of the village There were hundreds of thousands of artisans working on metal, wood and other raw materials There were oil-ghanis in every village so that people could get fresh nutritive oil on the spot. There were also artisans working on leather preparing shoes, chappals and other articles There were potters who manufactured artistic earthenware for the immediate consumption of the villagers But now all these village industries have decayed in the process of gradual exploitation of the villages by the cities Policies of the Government have also been rather vague and halting in this respect

Vinobaji is not against the use of better techniques of production But he does not naturally desire that technical progress should lead to unnecessary human suffering in the form of unemployment After all, man must be the over-riding consideration in all our planning It is much better to give productive work than to give doles The life of 'dole-eaters' in Western countries including the United States of America is by no means enviable From morning till night they lead a life which cannot be called human In consequence, they suffer physically, mentally and spiritually That is why Gandhiji always told us that it was immoral to eat food without work The Hindu scriptures teach us the same lesson "He who eats without doing work is a thief " Jesus Christ also wanted people to eat 'in the sweat of their brow.' It is this philosophy of 'Bread labour' which forms the basis of all Gandhian programmes of constructive work

Vinobaji is not at all against the use of electric power in

small machines like the spinning wheel Discussing about the latest type of Ambar Charkha, Vinobaji said "We can surely use electricity wherever necessary for increasing our output I am, however, keen that the use of electricity should not lead to economic exploitation This exploitation can be avoided if we make it a condition that electric power could be allowed to be used for Ambar Charkhas only if they are organised on a Co-operative basis" And Vinobaji added "I will not mind using even Atomic energy for the Ambar Charkha If there is any power which is found superior to Atomic energy I will have that also My only stipulation is that the use of such energy should not lead to unemployment and should not result in economic exploitation of man by man"

There is no question of anybody being against basic or mother industries such as Iron, Steel, Coal, heavy machinery and big power projects, etc Even Gandhiji was not against them He only desired that key or mother industries should be state-owned and managed; they should not be left to private enterprise. Vinobaji is very anxious that most of our consumer goods should be produced through decentralised industries These small-scale and village industries will not only provide fuller employment but will also reduce unnecessary strain on our transport system. Instead of carrying our raw materials over large distances, and then transporting once again the finished goods from the factories to the consumers in the four corners of the country, it is much better to convert various raw materials into finished goods in the villages themselves In other words, production should be almost simultaneous with distribution and consumption Such a type of economy would be less complicated and more natural The present nexus of money would also lose much of its artificial importance With the use of modern appliances and sources of power, products of village industries would not be costlier than those of the mills In fact, with lower over-head costs, ultimately village industry articles should be even cheaper than the factory products In an age of science it is surely not rational to set up huge factories which can be destroyed by aerial bombing in a few seconds The chronic problem of labour-capital conflict can also be easily resolved if production is decentralised into Industrial Co-operatives where workers themselves are the owners of the instruments of production.

Vinobaji is not against the private sector In fact, he would not like the State to take over too many basic industries because the establishment of heavy industries leads to unnecessary concentration of economic power Concentration of economic power ultimately leads to concentration of political power as well Such concentration of political power is surely not conducive to a sound and healthy democracy Vinobaji, therefore, pleads for a private sector in decentralised economy He would like every village community to be self-sufficient at least in regard to the basic needs of life, like food, housing, clothing, education and health Even if electricity or atomic energy is used by the village community it should be through small local projects Vinobaji would not like the village people to be dependent on a source of power which is transmitted to them over thousands of miles from a powerstation which can be destroyed so easily in times of war or which can go out of order even in normal times. Concentration of economic or political power necessarily leads to conditions of violence and conflict and economic exploitation Decentralised industrialisation is, therefore, essential even from the point of view of non-violent and peaceful democracy

Summing up his arguments Vinobaji said "If the Government or the industrialists are able to demonstrate to me that it is possible to provide full employment to our people through the method of large-scale industrialisation I would raise no other ideological or philosophical issues. If I am satisfied that any other scheme can provide full work to my people without exploiting them, I would unhesitatingly burn my wooden charkha and use it for cooking my own meal" He added "I am not enamoured of the spinning wheel for the sake of sentiment I do regard it as inevitable in the present economic condition of India I am a keen mathematician in my approach to problems As a rational and a scientific person I am willing to sacrifice anything for the sake of real human progress As a matter of fact, every important scientist has become a faddist He does not change his basic outlook and suffers from a craze for machinery without taking into consideration the true progress and happiness of mankind Unless science is wedded to non violence, it would mean the end and destruction of human existence In India, Science can be harnessed for a non-violent society only in the form of small-scale, village and cottage industries organised on a

co-operative basis"

VII

'UNTO THIS LAST'

One day I discussed with Vinobaji the question of economic planning and village industries I gave him a copy of the Draft Outline of the Second Five Year Plan published by the Planning Commission He said that he had read the summary as published in the newspapers And, then, he put me two questions Firstly, how much expenditure will be incurred on villages with a population of 2,000 or less ? Secondly, how would the Second Five Year Plan improve the economic condition of the poorest sections of society in the cities and the villages ? I told him that this question had been repeatedly raised in Parliament and in the AICC meetings The Planning Commission also had made some reference to these aspects in the Draft Outline of the Second Five Year Plan I, however, promised to request the Planning Minister, Shri Gulzarilal Nanda to prepare a notes on these two aspects, so that he may get a clearer idea of the ways and means in which the economic condition of the most backward sections of the population would be improved within the next five or ten years

Vinobaji continued "I shall await the Planning Commission's note on this subject But, I do feel that adequate attention has not been paid so far to the urgent needs of the lowliest and the most backward people in our country In the cities, there are slums with the most horrible conditions In the villages, there are millions of landless labourers and Harijans whose economic condition is, indeed, pitiable Even in the cities, what are we doing to improve the social and economic conditions of the sweepers, for example ? Unless the Second Five Year Plan tells me definitely as to how it will tackle these problems of the poorer sections, how can I talk to the people about the Second Five Year Plan with enthusiasm ?" This is the basic approach to planning which Vinobaji has been emphasising time and again Gandhiji also repeatedly told us that we must pay first attention to the needs of the man on the lowest rung of the ladder It was Ruskin's "Unto This Last" idea which had attracted Gandhiji from the very beginning In other words, Gandhian approach to planning is essentially a human approach We have to pay special

attention to the sorrows and suffering of the 'last man' before attending to the wants and requirements of others This is a matter which must be seriously attended to by our economists while fixing priorities in planning 'Sarvodaya Planning' essentially means '*Antyodaya* Planning', the well-being of the 'last man'

Vinobaji walks from village to village looking into the abnormal economic conditions of the poor and down-trodden people in the villages He never fails to make anxious enquiries about the condition of the Harijans, who, in spite of State legislation, are yet regarded as untouchables and are not allowed to mix freely in the social life of the village In his scheme of Bhoodan Yajna, Vinobaji has made it a rule that while redistributing the land, and-third of the total area should be given away to Harijans Even in the villages, there is great over-crowding of cottages and mud-houses in the Harijan colonies The villagers will not normally allow the untouchables to purchase land in their village for housing purposes Some of the land given in Bhoodan which is not fit for agriculture is, therefore, being given away to the Harijans for housing purposes The condition of the agricultural labourers also is deplorable They, on an average, constitute about 25 per cent of the population and are under-employed Their average income annually is only about Rs 100 The economic condition can be improved only if, in addition to agricultural operations, it is possible for them to utilise their idle hours in some home or village industry It is only in this way that they can supplement their meagre incomes

Vinobaji also talks to the villagers about the concept of a higher standard of living He does not want the villagers to flock to the towns He tells them that the so-called attractions of the town are illusory and do not make for a real higher standard of living He draws a difference between '*standard of life*' and '*standard of living*' In economic planning, economists talk about only raising the 'standard of living' of the people This means better houses, better food, better clothes, better education and more medical amenities But according to Vinobaji, man does not live by bread alone He also requires cultural, moral and spiritual standards which must be steadily improved Mere material planning does not lead to a sound, healthy and noble life Planning under the Sarvodaya principles nacessarily means an all-round development of the whole personality of man. Gandhiji laid stress

on this point in his scheme of Basic education which he gave to the nation about twenty years ago While talking to the villagers, Vinobaji wants them to continue to live in the countryside in more direct contact with Nature "The small and expensive houses in the cities in congested localities are no good" says Vinobaji "It is much better for you to live in your village huts and enjoy fresh air under the radiant sun Of course you should improve your existing houses and plan for better ventilation and better sanitation But do not try to rush to the cities in search of higher standard of living In cities like Bombay and Calcutta, the more crowded and congested the locality, the more expensive is the house If there are more windows in the house you have to pay a higher rent Why should you, then, migrate to the cities, paying more mony and getting less open air and fresh breeze ?"

One day he gave an interesting example to a village gathering In one of the cities he was invited by a rich zamindar who had donated some land to the Bhoodan to bless his family The zamindar proudly showed him a painting of the Rising Sun which had been purchased by him for about one hundred rupees Vinobaji smiled and said "Instead of purchasing the painting of the Rising Sun by paying Rs 100 for it, is it not better to live in a village and see the Sun rising in the East every morning, free of cost ?" And then he asked "Who enjoys a higher standard of living ? the so-called rich person who lives in the city in a crowded locality and hangs on his walls paintings depicting various natural scenes or he who lives in the village under healthy conditions and is in direct contact with Nature ?"

On another day, he gave one more interesting example "What is the use of gymnasia, and physical education clubs in the cities ?", he asked 'In the villages people work in a natural manner on their fields to raise crops, fruits and vegetables But this work is not generally regarded by the townsmen as noble and dignified They regard this manual labour as a drudgery. On the other hand, in cities they start gymnasia and physical education centres for taking exercise When their children cannot digest the food they eat, they are asked to go to those gymnasia to impeove their digestion In the educational institutions also children are taught various physical exercises to improve their health But, if the children in Basic schools are asked to work in fields to raise some vegetables or to work in the workshops to manufacture some useful articles, their parents frown on the school

authorities and tell them "We have not sent our children to your school for this manual drudgery " In this way normal productive work is looked down upon in modern society and physical exercises contrived in an artificial manner are regarded as fashionable Vinobaji asked the village gathering . "Which is a higher standard of living ? To live a normal life, to work for one's own livelihood in open-air conditions; or to live in cities on the labour of others and then to take physical exercises to improve one's digestion and appetite ?" And then Vinobaji added "I will any day prefer the former" "I have found that young men who are doing Bhoodan work and walk on foot from village to village improve their health while rendering service to the nation by helping in the process of redistribution of land to the poor people "

Referring to himself he said · "People think that I am undergoing a great physical strain in my Bhoodan walking tours It is not really so I enjoy my walks and they help me to keep physically fit When I sleep at night after a day's hard work, I sleep soundly like a log My sleep is not disturbed by dreams This dreamless sleep is a luxury which is not given to the city-dwellers I am, therefore, enjoying a really higher standard of living I have the privilege of living in a new house every day. I sleep under the open sky and stars and the whole country and indeed, the whole world, is my big family !"

VIII

PROHIBITION AND FAMILY PLANNING

Vinobaji is remarkable for his versatility and has original ideas to give on almost every subject under the Sun Before Gandhiji's passing away, Vinobaji confined himself to his Ashram and would not like to meet visitors. He was engaged in study and research all the time. I had seen him turning his back on those who came to meet him and to discuss with him certain problems Vinobaji came out of his "shell after the hand of Fate took away Gandhiji from the scene Of course, during his life time, Gandhiji nominated him to be the first Satyagrahi in the 1940 Anti-war Individual Satyagraha. But, little was known about the life and work of this remarkable man till Gandhiji's assassination Soon after, Vinobaji went to Delhi to help the Government in

not be introduced in India within a year or two He was glad to hear from me that the representatives of the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force had willingly agreed to fall in line with the policy of nation-wide Prohibition and did not want that any exceptions be made for them More than anybody else, the armed forces of the country should be free from the drink habit The guardians of the country, says he cannot afford to be off their senses

Without Prohibition a considerable amount of purchasing power placed in the hands of the people under the Second Five Year Plan would naturally go down the drain Vinobaji is, Therefore, anxious that Prohibition should be introduced throughout the country at any early date He is, however, convinced that such a social programme cannot be implemented with the help of the police and legislation alone In order to make this experiment a real success it is necessary for social and constructive workers to bend their energies towards making Prohibition a popular programme through mass contacts and educative propaganda That is why he himself makes it a point utilise every opportunity during his walking tours to impress upon people the urgent need for giving up the evil habit of drink

Vinobaji is also very sorry to note that the Planning Commission and the Government of India have provided several crores of rupees for establishing clinics for family planning To him the very idea of family planning in an artificial manner is repulsive This does not mean that he is against exercising control over the size of the family But he is keen that this process of limitation of family should be through self-control rather than through Birth Control methods Artificial methods lead to self-indulgence and physical and moral deterioration of the individual concerned While trying to limit the family such artificial methods brings on their train new social maladies, and tend to produce physical and moral wrecks in society.

The National planners have no right, says Vinobaji, to tell the people that they cannot solve the problem of unemployment if there is no family-planning Servants of the people have no business to tell their masters as to how many sons and daughters they should have It is the look-out of the people and their moral and religious teachers. The Government of the day must be able to provide full work to the people as they are. Vinobaji says "It is not the weight of numbers but the weight of sin which proves to

be the real burden on earth". If parents are hard-working, honest, and lead a life of restraint, their children will discover ways and means to feed themselves. "We must remember that if Nature has given us one mouth to eat, she has also given us two hands and ten fingers to feed that mouth", remarked Vinobaji It is the duty of the State to create conditions for providing work to all its ablebodied citizens Science can find out various methods for utilising the natural resources more intensively for feeding its additional population To restrict numbers by artificial methods is to accept bankruptcy of modern science in increasing our capacity to produce more consumer goods Family planning, therefore, according to Vinobaji, is a counsel of despair It would create more problems than it would solve

IX

BUILDING FROM BELOW

Vinobaji attaches the highest importance to the urgent need for building up our national economic life from below He strongly feels that planning from above in a centralised fashion is suicidal both to the community as well as the individual. Although some amount of centralisation would be necessary for a big country like India at least in respect of general direction and guidance, he feels that the village communities should be given substantial initiative and political power to regulate their own social and economic life in the village or group of villages In the absence of such decentralisation or revolution of authority. the individuals and the rural communities are likely to be converted into mere cogs of a huge machinery for planning without opportunities for undertaking local responsibilities According to the basic principles of Sarvodaya it is necessary to organise society in such a manner that the interests of both the individual and the community are properly harmonised and there is full scope for the development of both. In other words, we should try to avoid '*Totalitarian Society*' as well as '*Totalitarian Man*'

It is from this point of view that Gandhiji laid great emphasis on the desirability of developing village panchayats in India Vinobaji also is keen that these village communities should be given ample opportunities for developing their social, economic, political

and cultural life in accordance with their own ideas and aspirations He goes to the extent of saying that each village or a group of villages should have the requisite powers to regulate their imports and exports It is difficult to say whether this will be practicable under the existing circumstances Nevertheless, the fact remains that exploitation of the villages by the cities in the shape of mill-made consumer goods flooding the rural markets continues, to this day, almost unabated This drain of wealth from the villages to the cities can be reversed only if the village-manufactured goods begin to find an increasing place in the markets of the cities Village Consumers' Societies under the Panchayats should, therefore, have some powers to limit the import of factory-made goods into the countryside at least during the period of transition Vinobaji thinks that the village communities should be entitled to impose some tariff duties on the flow of the city goods into the villages The State also should give every encouragement to the village and cottage industries so that they may gradually increase their inherent strength and be in a position to compete with the mill-made goods on an equal footing It is wrong to think that the big factories in India have been able to withstand foreign competition without the help of the State Large Textile and Sugar Mills have been given, directly and indirectly, substantial amounts of money from the public exchequer for foreign countries Even today a number of large-scale industries in our country will topple down like houses of cards if the economic assistance by the Government is withdrawn. Vinobaji, therefore, desires that the State should devote equal attention, if not more, to the difficulties and requirements of the small-scale, village and cottage industries in India.

There is, however, one point about the village panchayats on which Vinobaji has expressed great concern during recent months His Bhoodan tours have convinced him that the village panchayats can function equitably only if the social and economic disparities are liquidated in the rural communities. He is of the definite opinion that full-fledged Panchayats should be established only in those villages where land has been redistributed either through Bhoodan or State Legislation, and where small-scale, village and cottage industries have been established on a cooperative basis In the absence of these economic reforms, village panchayats may, according to Vinobaji, instead of being instruments of real well-

being turn into engines of social and economic oppression and exploitation Through these panchayats the erstwhile zamindars who are now turned into substantial cultivators are likely to capture political power in the villages, where no redistribution of land has taken place so far In some villages, business-men running privately-owned business or small or medium size factories will try to dominate the village communities Vinobaji is, thus, convinced that economic revolution in the village must precede the establishment of Gram Panchayats with substantial or full powers

Planning from below is desirable from the point of lessening undue strain on our national transport system as well At present much of our energy is wasted by first transporting our raw materials like cotton, oil or leather from the four corners of the country to the sites of a few big factories Later manufactured goods are distributed in the markets all over the country In this age of Science when it is possible to decentralize electric power and to supply it to the remotest villages, it is hardly rational to concentrate our industries in a few urban centres Science has made decentralisation not only possible but almost inevitable Vinobaji thinks that it would be highly unscientific to resist decentralisation of economic power any longer Building from below is, therefore, the only scientific method of modern planning

X

DEMOCRACY AND ELECTIONS

These days, Acharya Vinoba Bhave has been thinking furiously about the system of elections in India He strongly feels that the present system of elections in India and elsewhere is not conducive to sound and healthy democracy Direct elections to the Parliament and the State Legislatures involve huge expenditure and encourage casteism, linguism and compel people to elect representatives with whom they are not personally acquainted Different political parties have to ask for money from the capitalists for running those costly elections with the result that the richer classes are able to exercise visible influence on the shaping of the economic policies of the country From this point of view, Vinobaji feels that the existing system of elections definitely proves to be a hindrance in the way of establishment of a Socialist Pattern of Society Vinobaji, therefore, is very keen that this

system should be radically changed as early as possible If it is not possible to effect substantial changes before the 1957 elections, this work may be taken up soon after, so that the 1962 elections may be held on a different and more rational basis It is quite evident that a change in the system of elections will involve vital changes in the Indian Constitution itself

Vinobaji is of the view that there should be direct elections at the village level and indirect elections at the district, State, and all-India levels This was also the considered view of Gandhiji It is true that there are definite advantages and disadvantages in the systems of direct and indirect elections It is, therefore, necessary to evolve a system which would combine the good points in both and avoid the evils Vinobaji feels that there should be direct democracy at the base In other words, a village or a group of villages should elect their panchayats on the basis of adult franchise Further, as far as possible, these elections at the village panchayat level should be unanimous or near-unanimous In ancient India sanctity of Gram Panchayats depended mainly on their unanimous elections and decisions. '*Panch Parmeshwar*' meant that the unanimous voice of the Panchas was the voice of Divinity It is true that it may not be possible to revive the ancient system of Gram Panchayats in exactly its old form It is, however, possible to develop a system of village communities in India which would become a model for a decentralised democratic system in other countries also

The district, State and all-India representatives could be elected on an indirect basis from the village upwards Such a system would ensure direct and local democracy at the bottom and indirect and representative democracy upwards In a system of indirect elections there are, undoubtedly, some inherent dangers A smaller electorate is open temptations of money, caste, and communal considerations, specially in under-developed countries But these dangers pale into insignificance when compared with difficulties encountered in a system of direct elections in large constituencies involving huge sums of money

Parliamentary democracy on the basis of Party system, in the opinion of Vinobaji, is not suitable to Indian conditions He would prefer a system of what may be called 'composite' democracy or Sarvodaya Society. A system in which people are elected on Party tickets on the basis of simple majority cannot be called real

democracy In a number of cases candidates are elected with a minority vote, It may be that the Party which obtains a bare majority in the legislature may have received less than fifty per cent of the total votes polled Further, such a majority Party elects its leader by a majority vote In this way the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister cannot be regarded in all cases as the really popular leader of the masses Vinobaji would prefer a good Government chosen freely by the people on the basis of the Panchayat system The very basis of the Panchayat system is fundamentally opposed to the system of Party Government In economically under-developed countries it is necessary that well-meaning people even of different shades of opinion work together for the all-round progress of the nation From this point of view, Vinobaji is eager that the leaders of the Congress, Praja Socialist Party and Sarvodaya Samaj should come closer to the one another in the execution of various constructive and developmental activities, even before it is possible to evolve a different political system in India

Vinobaji during one of his morning walks made two concrete proposals for eliminating the existing bitterness between various political Parties Firstly, a convention may be developed in the country of not setting up candidates in the general elections against recognised leaders of various political Parties He expects that if the Congress takes a lead in this matter other parties would follow suit Secondly, a healthy convention may be developed to the effect that in the bye-elections, the Party whose member has either died or has resigned should be allowed to set up another candidate without any contest by other Parties For example, if the person happens to be a Congressman, the Congress Party should set up another candidate in his place and other Parties should not enter into the election contest The same principle could be followed by the Congress Party in case the person on whose account the seat has fallen vacant happens to belong to the PSP or the Communist or any other Party This convention, Vinobaji feels will help the political Parties in concentrating on constructive work and not fritter away their energies all the time in bye-elections.

XI

VINOBA WITH NEHRU

On the occasion of his visit to Nizamabad in connection with the annual session of the Bharat Sewak Samaj, Shri Nehru decided to meet Vinobaji in Madhoraopalle, a village about 100 miles from Hyderabad It was in May 1955, that Panditji had met Vinobaji last time in Orissa at the time of the Berhampore session of the All India Congress Committee This meeting, therefore, gave an opportunity to the two personalities to exchange their views on the different problems after a period of about ten months

Panditji went by train to Jedhcherla and then motored down to Madhoraopalle village where Vinobaji was halting for the day. When Panditji reached the outskirts of the village he was greeted by a large crowd which had assembled there to get a glimpse of the great leader Soon after, Vinobaji came out of the cottage and received Panditji The two, then greeted the crowds and requested them to disperse and reassemble at another place where Panditji would meet them before returning to Hyderabad The two leaders then sat down in the outer verandah of the cottage and began discussing a number of problems of national importance I had the privilege of being the only other person present during the talks which continued for about two hours

To begin with, Panditji informed Vinobaji about the decision of the Government of India regarding Andhra-Telangana An announcement in this connection was made by Shri Nehru on the previous day at Nizamabad Panditji also acquained Vinobaji with the discussions which were going on between the Government and the Akalis regarding the reorganisation of the Punjab The idea of a Regional Committee or a Council was being worked out for both areas The two leaders had also some discussion about the conditions in Maharashtra Both of them were much pained at the conditions of violence and civil disorder prevailing in the area Panditji, however, told Vinobaji that he had declared in the Parliament that he was always willing to discuss various points to find out a satisfatory solution to the problem Panditji also informed Vinobaji about the latest developmentt in regard to the proposal for the merger of Bengal and Bihar He said that he was

very much disturbed by the attitude of students and young men in Bihar, Bengal and elsewhere Their indiscipline and violent behaviour did not augur well for the future of the country

The Congress President, Shri Dhebarbhai was very keen that when Panditji and Vinobaji meet they should have a frank talk about Basic education so that it may be possible to make it the future pattern of national education according to a definite programme I had already shown to Panditji the notes of my talks with Vinobaji on the subject Panditji said that the Government of India had already dedided to introduce Basic education throughout the country But, there were many vested interests in the educational sphere which had to be dealt with properly and tactfully Panditji humorously remarked that, perhaps, the vested interests in Education were the strongest and the most persistent Vinobaji had suggested that a large number of retired teachers could be persuaded to become teachers in Basic schooles, in more or less, honorary capacity They would be able to impart not only knowledge of different academic subjects but also pass on to the young students the fruits of their ripe and rich experience Punditji said that he would welcome some good retired people to work as teachers, but he was not very much in favour of many such people becoming teachers in Basic shools because these people at an advanced age generally become static and may not be able to make dynamic experiments in this field Panditji also pointed out that under the Indian Constitution, Education was a State subject and the various States naturally resent excessive interference by the Centre It had been suggested that the University Grants Commission may exercise some pressure on the Universities for recognising the Basic educational system Panditji throught that to exercise influence on the strength of financial help was not very proper He was of the view that each State should have some freedom and elasticity in experimenting with Basic education Any imposition of a rigid and inelastic system of Basic education would not be desirable at this stage

Panditji was in full agreement with Vinobaji that the University degrees should not be the sole criterion for admission into Government services Students of Basic and Post-Basic schools as well as those who may not have taken any degrees should be allowed to take the various competitive examinations for Government services on the strength of their merits and capacities Panditji informed Vinobaji that the Government of India had

appointed a committee for the purpose and he was sure that is will be possible to take action on the recommendations of that Committee without much delay The Committee has already recommended to the Government that except in the case of the IAS competitive examinations, University degrees should not be regarded as essential for recruitment to any other type of Government service This will naturally give sufficient encouragement to the products of Basic Schools who acquire not only knowledge of different academic subjects but also gain valuable practical experience in various aspects of life

As regards the question of having only one scale of salarly for all the Basic education teachers Panditji thought that this was essentially a financial matter because uniform salaries would mean a much higher salary for all teachers Still, there was no doubt that every attempt should be made to reduce the economic disparities among the Basic education teachers.

Vinobaji has been following the progress of land reforms in Bihar with keen interests He feels that the Bihar Government should be able to persuade the State Legislature to adopt a very progressive measure in as much as Bihar has given the highest quantity of land in Bhoodan He conveyed to Panditji his feeling that the Government of Bihar would be able to utilise the good atmosphere created by the Bhoodan movement for introducing radical agrarian reforms I informed the two leaders that Nandaji was arranging to have a top-level discussion on the Land Reforms Bill in Bihar in the presence of the Congress President and other members of the Planning Commission, in order to find out the largest measure of agreement Prominent leaders of Bhoodan movement in Bihar will also be invited to attend these discussions

Vinobaji told Panditji that in his opinion the present system of elections was the root of many troubles Elections should be direct at the base and indirect from the village upwards I had already communicated Vinobaji's views on the subject in some detail to Panditji in the form of a note Panditji agreed with Vinobaji that it was necessary to change the present system of elections There was some danger of corruption in the indirect system of election also But various methods could be found to obviate the evil Panditji thought that if the Government proceeded to change the entire system of elections just at present, other political Parties in the country might misunderstand this

move The matter could, therefore, be taken up immediately after the next general elections.

After the talks were over, both Panditji and Vinobaji walked together to the neighbouring place where about five thousand people had assembled to see both the leaders As soon as the great men ascended the dais they were loudly cheered by the people. Panditji told them that Vinobaji had started a great revolutionary movement and that it was the duty of all to help this movement to the best of their ability As Panditji had to return to Hyderabad the same evening he spoke to the gathering only for a few minutes and then walked with Vinobaji to his car While taking leave of Vinobaji, Panditji clasped Vinobaji's hands and feelingly remarked "Do take care your health, don't overdo yourself" Vinobaji was visibly moved

I stayed behind for about an hour to get Vinobaji's reaction about his talks with Panditji Vinobaji was full of emotion and kept silent for some time He, then, quietly told me "It is true that I am overdoing myself My physical energy is waning day by day Formerly, I used to walk daily 10 to 15 miles Now I cannot do more than 8 miles a day I somehow consume 1,300 calories and that too in about a dozen feeds But, while I discuss other subjects my mind is constantly fixed on achieving the Bhoodan targets by the end of 1957" And then he feelingly remarked 'For me it is a do-or-die mission "

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VINOBA—THE ANARCHIST

C.A. Menon

Until he read about Gandhiji and his satyagraha in South Africa Vinoba Bhave's aim in life was "to end the British empire in India by killing an Englishman." Influenced greatly by the fiery writings of Tilak and inspired by the historical heroes like Shivaji, he was keen on freeing this country from the shackles of a foreign regime by violent means too The sensational speech of Gandhiji at Benares University before a distinguished gathering of princes and nobles presided over by Mrs Annie Besant in 1916, aroused his thoughts towards a new non-violent direction. The resulting correspondence with Gandhiji and his ultimate absorption in Sabarmati Ashram completely transformed him so much so the saintly Vinoba, as he is known, came to be recognised as he perfect constructive worker and non-violent soldier. Gandhiji chose him for unique occasions like the Vaikom Satyagraha for temple entry for Harijans in 1924 and for Individual satyagraha in 1942, from among his numerous followers including distinguished political leaders like Pandit Nehru. Otherwise devoted to silent service and scholarly pursuits. Vinoba by his austere and disciplined life prepared himself for, as Gandhiji wished, "becoming an instrument of great service"

AN INDIVIDUALIST

Vinoba was an individualist right from his childhood At home except for his great attachment to his mother, he lived in a world of his own His teachers also found in this studious boy an

independent rebel who was allergic to conformities He would fearlessly break all irrational bindings despite the orthodox scorns and scare the provoked He would silently suffer them instead of resorting to loud protests individually or collectively Barring a solitary instance when for curiosity sake he joined the Indian National Congress by paying 4 annas as membership and attended an A I C C session which debated on the subtleties of rules and the constitution, he declined to be under any organisation It is said he sat in a corner of the A I C C pandal listening for some time to the heated debates on rules and walked out for the first and last time never to seek such "wasteful experiences" He was ready to dedicate himself to great causes like India's freedom, "non-violent society etc but not to organisations In fact he gave a call for *tantra mukti* (freedom from organisation) and *Kanchan mukti* (freedom from money) etc so that individuals may contibute more to the movements like Bhoodan and Gramdan and causes like Sarvodaya (a classless society) Veterans of Khadi and other Village Industries look askance at his bold advice very often to free themselves from government dependence by voluntarily declining subsidies and aids The feeble among his followers consider such steps as mad But the more convinced and the faithful know rightly he wants these basic village industries to develop on their own in order to achieve village autonomy and through them a strong and free India to be of service to the whole humanity

WHY LOOK TO GOVERNMENT FOR EVERYTHING ?

The fatalist Indians have a habit of assigning everything to God and destiny and apportioning blame on the rulers Draughts and famines, floods and calamities are all easily reasoned out as the result of insincerity of kings and ministers This traditional character in us was largely exploited by political propagandists during the British rule for fanning up patriotic fervour and uniting the country against the British "Remove the foreign rule, everything will be alright" This was the panacea offered by fiery politicians for all the evils in India This legacy has come down to the post-independent era too Today the many political parties find in that easy argument an instrument to incite hatred against a ruling party and individuals in government Whether it be Bihar Famine, Rice shortage in Kerala, floods in Delhi, riots in Ranchi,

Vietnam War and other troubles in any corner of the world, the government becomes the main target for attack and criticism This subtle psychology of finding fault with others for all the ills one suffers is applied on a mass scale by the ambitious individuals and parties to climb into power The destruction wrought in the society by hatred against the government is quite enormous and novel Ultimately it is the individual himself who is inconvenienced by such havoc on public utility services like the railways, transport, offices etc

It is against this background that Gandhiji and Vinobaji have to be viewed By emphasising on constructive programme even while India was struggling for its freedom Gandhiji tried to change this psychology of the people to depend on the government for anything and everything Despite all the arguments for abolition of the State ultimately, as advanced by the Socialist philosophy, it is obvious that practically the hold of the State is increasing in every aspect of individual's life with his increasing dependence on government for the fulfilment of his needs Hence man though "Born free, he is found in chains everywhere" Gandhiji's aim was to find ways of freeing him from these self-inflicted slavery

THE KEY IS WITH PEOPLE

True to his master, Vinobaji has tried to pursue the path opened by Gandhiji All his ideas and plans properly analysed will conclusively prove his anarchist tendency He would have the least reliance on the government but he would like the maximum intiative of the people at individual and collective level But, unlike the traditional anarchists, he would not preach nor practise violent ways to end governments but very subtly remove the sting of the power and keep the beauty of the society unimpaired. Hence through there were numerous occasions and demands for violent agitations and protests against governmental policies and programmes, Vinobaji quite exasperating to many of his followers, cooly rebuffs any arguments for agitative methods This has cast on him many critical views and some have abused him "as evader of issues" "Others have enjoined on him the epithet of "*Sarkar ki Sant*" (the sant of the government) To more intelligent men it will be evident that his purpose is to arouse public initiative and lessen government control To ask for government laws and

protection for the rights and freedom of the people is to deny them more and more On the other hand if issues and problems are solved without governmental aid it will lessen the importance of the government and thus gradually destroy it non-violently

THE TURNING POINT IN TELENGANA

In 1951 the land problem in Telengana assumed a very violent turn It was at that time Vinobaji went alone to that area and tried to seek a solution without government aid Even he, in the face of the miseries of the Harijans of Pochampalli, for a moment became weak and was thinking of seeking Nehru government's help to give 80 acres of land so the landless in that village But suddenly wisedom dawned on him and he sought the goodwill of the people themselves The hundred acres he got on that day by his appeal to the prayer assembly in Pochampalli village was a great realisation not only for him but for the whole world For, it marked the beginning of a flow of gifts which continues to date against all arguments to the contrary At a time when violence was preached to bring economic and social equality in society, when the government was pressurised to enact laws to achieve this end, Vinobaji cut a new path of love and mass appeal Thousands and thousands of people all over the country responded to his call and lakhs of acres of land were donated to be distributed to the landless It was an impossible task before 1951 But by 1957 it became a real thing when 50 lakhs of acres of land were gifted all over the country by the rich and the poor A mass realisation that a selfless service can dispense with all the pharaphernalia and machineries of government to bring relief and consolation to the people swept the country To keep up this awakening, Vinobaji initiated many more programmes as and when problems arose.

While the government was limping on issues like nationalisation, Vinobaji through *gramdan* evolved sociolisation of land and property with the least resistance and the greatest goodwill While government was imposing responsibilities on an unwilling panchayat in the villages, Vinobaji prepared the ground for autonomous village assemblies ready to shoulder all burdens and solve problems at local level by peoples' initiative A number of gifts which he asked from the people aimed at this and indirectly intended to end the dependence on the government especially in the wake of socialistic welfare programmes of the State To create

wealth for the welfare of the people, he sought *shramdan* (gift of labour) from all able-bodied people Collective contribution of small sums of either grain or money through *Sarvodaya Patra* was a very intelligent programme which he envisaged and where these are implemented, they are a source of great income for public utility services like medical aid, education, care of the aged and the children In these days when for all work, we depend on governmental aid, this will stand as a great revelation A Shanti Sainik in every village is what he prescribes for the village freedom from city control through police and courts The devoted and dedicated constructive worker in a village will advise and guide the potentially powerful village assemblies to settle all disputes and maintain law and order The model for such a powerful worker was given by Gandhiji when as "one man's boundary force" he checked the violence in the wake of partition of this country and restored sanity and order on many occasions when violence swept the land There are hundreds of such workers even today in many remote villages of India where the police and the courts are quite unknown In gramdan villages he has suggested village assemblies consisting of all adult members in the village and village fund created out of the contributions from all in the village to make it autonomous He also wants a shanti sainik in such villages to create a spirit of service and independence It is also his wish that such villages should plan for themselves instead of becoming the instruments of implementing a national plan drawn and imposed on them by experts in ivory towers Vinobaji has practically shown how planning can be done at the lowest unit level In 1951 he came to Delhi to reason out with the First Planning Commission for such a step It took fifteen years to educate the experts in Delhi for the change in outlook Government cannot think It is the people alone who can effect change. Hence Vinobaji's appeal is to the people directly on all issues whether it be linguistic confusions, provincial parochialism, religions fanaticism, political muddings or international issues

ANARCHISM WITHOUT VIOLENCE

Essentially, therefore, Vinobaji is for the awakening of the people But indirectly he is freeing them from the control of the State and lessening the importance of the government Anarchist

thus in subtle sense, he does not employ violent means to achieve his aim But optimistic as he is, he knows the gramdan movement at its peak hour will usher in a Sarvodaya society which will end all inequalities without the least need for law and violence The potentialities of gramdan are little realised by the intelligentsia When in 1952 the first gramdan in Mangrot (U P) occurred, its significance was little realised by the large public That was a solitary instance of socialisation of land for a long time But now when 60,000 gramdans have been realised all over India, there are some who sit up and rub their eyes What more, one whole district of Dharbhanga (with an area and population more than that of Denmark) has accepted gramdan and thus giving consent to socialisation of land by 50 lakhs of people, in Dharbhanga district alone Sitting in Bihar, with a determination, he is aiming at the whole of Bihar as gift which means 5 crores of people agreeing to socialisation of land And as he prepares the ground for such transformation, government and other vested interests with least resistance approve the change effected and give a stamp of legalisation by passing Gramdan Acts without much hullaloo about the great change Fifty per cent of the States in India have passed Gramdan Act, thus, consenting to the principle of socialisation of land, and accepting the village autonomy. Think of the explosive potentialities if such issues were raised in Parliament or state legislatures ! But here is Vinobaji, the Anarchist, effecting change without any opposition and carrying everyone with him. Is it not a miracle, if it may be termed so, in the face of increasing State subjection of the individual and identification of the society with government, to see millions non-violently striving for assertion of society and the individual ?

Godwin, Kroptokin and others of the West may be great anarchist theoriticians But here is Vinoba, true to Gandhiji, practically implementing anarchism in all its good implications Is it not time for political thinkers and sociologists to take Vinoba more seriously ?

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THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY OF ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE*

G P. SRIVASTAVA**

The Philosophy of Sarvodaya was propounded by Mahatma Gandhi from whom it has been taken over by Acharya Vinoba Bhave—his spiritual heir [1] In the words of Dr Rajendra Prasad, the latter's work "is an extension of the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi, and the further application of his method [2]" Actually Vinobaji has built his philosophy on the principles of non-violence and trusteeship subscribed to by Gandhiji.

SARVODAYA SOCIETY

The aim of Acharya Vinoba Bhave is to establish a casteless, classless and stateless society[3] based on love and non-violence This Utopian society is to be established through Bhoodan (Land Gift), Sampattidan (Wealth Gift), Shram Dan (Labour Gift), Buddhi Dan (Wisdom Gift) and Prem Dan (Love Gift) The first has taken the form of Gram Dan. Such a society is to be established under conditions of an advanced industrial life involving mechanisation and large scale production, although the latter would be reduced to the minimum in this society In his view

* In writing this article the author has received much help from Km. Prabha Raizada, M A

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technical progress would go side by side with the establishment of self-sufficient and self-governing village communities But the core of this society would be founed by the small peasant proprietor along with the small producer and artisan in the village The picture of this society has been painted in these words Human society must be based on mutual co operation The basis of this new society will be love Its objective will be the happiness and prosperity of all Every member of this society will be free with a maximum degree of equality, without class or caste, injustice or exploitation Every member of this society will have full opportunity to develop his personality While the individual will be its centre, self-interest will not be the basis of the social edifice This will ensure all-sided development of man, eliminating the possibilities of one-sided development '

In the economic field all wealth would belong to society and it would be used for promoting social good Production would carried on for need and not profit The principle 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his need' would operate in this society In it there would be no governmental coercion Moreover, as the state itself would become superfluous under such conditions, only some rules for production and distribution would be needed

Such a society would be decentralized[4] and would be organised on the basis of small scale units and organisations in order that democracy and freedom may be realised in actual practice Every primary unit would be economically self-sufficient This would ensure its freedom Actually, the use of machinery leads to centralized production which in turn leads to concentration of wealth and power which again leads to domination and exploitation It is precisely for this reason that the new society would be based on decentralization which does not mean the use of outmoded but of improved machinery

As the development and progress of the individual as well as society is possible through human labour, no distinction between intellectual and manual labour would be made in this society Moreover, social control and democratic management would be established over even those industries in which large scale production resulting in centralization is unavoidable The production of armaments would be totally banned in it In such a society there would be no conflict as nobody would act in a selfish manner Decisions would be arrived at unanimously.[5] Sometimes

there might be honest differences among the people with regard to the promotion of social welfare In such a case decision would be postponed If the individual differs from society and thinks it to be the voice of his conscience, he would have the right of 'Satyagraha' which is the final guarantee of individual and civil liberty

BHOODAN

It is the first step towards the establishment of the 'Sarvodaya Samaj' R.P Masani regards it as "an unparallelled human endeavour for the regeneration of society "[6] Actually Vinobaji started with Bhoodan because he rightly felt that the land problem is the most important in Indian economic life, she being a predominantly agricultural country A solution of this problem has to be attempted from the point of view of the land owner as well as the landless person Hence he singled it out for solution first He made it clear in these words . "The land problem was a basic one and I saw that unless something was done to meet it, it might develop into a big danger detrimental to the security of the nation I, therefore, thought it fit first to concentrate my energy only on that question "[7] Furthermore, in one of his post-prayer speeches in Bihar he remarked . "The Bhoodan programme is, as they say, only the thin end of the wedge of all that we want to do We want to make people free from all attachment to wealth and material things The Bhoodan Campaign is merely the beginning of this long and comprehensive plan "[8] He has appealed to the people to promote this movement for three reasons Firstly, it is in conformity with the cultural traditions of India Secondly, it contains in it the seeds of social and economic revolution Lastly, it would promote world peace

(i) Its Scientific Origin

Whatever one may say with regard to the aim and method of Bhoodan, it cannot be denied that it had a scientific origin. In fact, it may not be too much to say that Acharya Vinoba Bhave is not only a saint but also a social scientist. He has an open mind and it was on the basis of his empirical approach that he arrived at this none too original idea

In 1951 be visited Telengana where the communists had established a reign of terror. At Pochampalli in the Nalgonda

district Vinoba put a question to some Harijans who assembled at his place as to what would serve their interests They replied if they got some land their problems would be solved Thereupon, he asked the people present in the gathering whether any land holders could donate his land for the purpose To the surprise of all, one man came forward and he donated more than the required quantity of land [9] This was an extra-ordinary incident and it set Vinoba's mind a-thinking He passed a sleepless night and thought over it again and again When Vinoba visited the next village he made a similar demand and luckily another donor came forward This made Vinoba more enthusiastic and he started the great experiment of Bhoodan

The Scientific attitude of Vinobaji is evident from the appeal to the nation which he issued on April 28, 1952 at Akbarpur in Fyzabad district of Uttar Pradesh He said

> 'I had been trying to find some field for experiments with non-violence since Gandhiji's death I took part in the work of rehabilitating Meo-Muslims with this very idea It was a good experience It encouraged me to go to Telangana I saw there the vision of Ahimsa (non-violence) in the form of Bhoodan Yagna
>
> In the course of two months which I took to reach Delhi, I received some eighteen thousand acres of land I then realized that the masses were eager to welcome non-violence
>
> At the request of some friends of Sarvodaya in U P, "I ventured on this *experiment*[10] of Bhoodan Yagna in the larger field of U.P."[11]

(ii) Methods of Bhoodan

Vinobaji wants those who possess more land than they need to part with the surplus for the use of the landless persons His argument runs thus "If there are five sons in the family, I want to be considered the sixth, if four, the fifth Thus, I claim one-sixth or one-fifth of the total cultivable land in the country " He continues . "My target is 50 million acres of land Since there are 300 Million acres of cultivable land in India and an average family has five members, I felt that every family could give away one-sixth of its land holding, accepting the poor landless man as the sixth member of the family This is a way bringing about a

peaceful revolution in the country" But this means that everybody rich or poor would have to make equal sacrifice which would not be fair to the poor When this was pointed out of Vinobaji he answered : "When the poor decide to give land, it has a tremendous effect on the minds of the rich We can then demand more than one sixth from the rich We can say to them, God has given you more, therefore, you can spare more"[12]

Vinobaji says that all land belongs to God and, therefore, it should be socially owned But B T Ranadive says "To convince people—rich and poor—to part with their land he constantly says that land belongs to God and no one can hold it as his private property But, he is not prepared to assert God's right though legislation, nor call on the toiling masses to assert their right to land, on the other hand, he is for bringing God's right by giving compensation to the landlords"[13] Actually his philosophy is a mixture of religion and science and is incomprehensible to people with a purely materialistic approach to life

GRAMDAN

It is an advanced stage of Bhoodan during which whole villages offer their land gift fund The objectives of Gramdan are

(1) Elimination of poverty, (2) Awakening of feelings of love and affection in the hearts of landowners leading to the improvement of general moral atmosphere in the country, (3) Strengthening of society by forging bonds of mutual help and fellow-feeling, thus mitigating class hatred between big landholders and the landless, (4) Revival and furtherence of Indian culture based on India's unique philosophy of Yagna, dana and tapas, thus strengthening the faith of man in true religion, (5) Building a new social order on the basis of voluntary bodily labour, non-possession, co-operation and self-reliance, (6) Giving an opportunity to all political parties to form a common platform and work unitedly, thus rooting out bitterness and self-aggrandisement, and (7) Helping world peace.

But more Gramdan would not usher in a millennium unless a fundamental change takes place in the social structure and outlook. In fact, B T Ranadive is of the view "that so long as all the means of production are not socially owned, so long as commodity

production is not eliminated, mere establishment of Gramdan will not stop the process of village exploitation The market will continue to exploit it through prices and unequal exchange and poverty cannot be entirely eliminated "[14]

Vinobaji seems to believe in individual and not co-operative production in his ideal society Moreover, in his scheme of things agriculture and the spinning-wheel would go together He also believes that the village must make use of articles produced by its own artisans and craftsmen Thus he would restrict intercourse with the outside world to the minimum because he is of the view that the townsmen exploit the villagers But it would be clear to any realist that the village would not be able to stand by itself without government help and legislation

SAMPATTIDAN

To Bhoodan and Gramdan Vinobaji has added 'Sampattidan ' He expects every one to part with one-sixth of his wealth This would, in his opinion, create such a moral atmosphere as to lead to the surrender by the rich of their surplus wealth to the community Vinobaji thought that this would enable the giver to live at his best creative level The amount donated would remain with the donor He would simply spend it as directed by Vinobaji or his nominee and then send the accounts to him Although he wants 'Sampattidan mainly to finance the Bhoodan activities, it is expected to serve a five-fold purpose :

(1) To enable the rich to win the love and confidence of the poor, (2) To make both the rich and the poor discard their purposiveness and to regard all wealth as belonging to society (3) To render money or gold valueless and to regard labour as real wealth, (4) To generate Lok Shakti (power of the the people) and to make people self-reliant and less dependent on government, and (5) To recast the social order.

Obviously, it is sheer idealism to think that 'Sampattidan' would be able to attain these high ideals Moreover, it is next to impossible to hope that the vested interests would give up their wealth and property.

VINOBAJI'S VIEWS ON PARTY SYSTEM

Vinobaji is opposed to party system. He thinks that it is

foreign to the genius of the people of India He is in favour of the dissolution of the various parties and their combination in "a United front made up of all good and honest people in the country carrying out commonly agreed programmes "[15] He once remarked "I do not recognize parties at all Moreover, my study of history, experience of current affairs and thinking all leads me to the conclusion that parties in our country cannot only not do much good but are in the long run likely to prove disastrous "[16] There is no doubt that the parties resort to various unfair means to achieve their aims They practise fraud on the people, propagate falsehoods among them and even exercise a corrupting and debasing influence on the social and political life of the people. Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan rightly points out "All that the parties were concerned with was to capture power for themselves so as to rule over the people, no doubt, with their consent The party-system, so it appeared to me, was seeking to reduce the people to the position of sheep whose only function of sovereignty would be to choose periodically the shepherds who would look after their welfare "[17] But after all the defects are pointed out if has to be admitted that parties have become very necessary in the present day world In fact, some persons would go to the extent of asserting that they are based on the social nature of man In the field of government their utility under a democratic set up cannot be overemphasized as representative government is party government Moreover, we know for certain that parties have been responsible for turning a class state into the present democratic state But Vinobaji's opposition extends to parliamentary government itself As an alternative he has suggested that laws should be made with common approval which is hardly practicable

HIS VIEWS ON MONEY

He is opposed to money He said in Delhi in November, 1951 "I do not want to waste my efforts in dealing with the problems created by money which is at the root of this country's degradation People should work to live rather than ask others for money Money should be eliminated from the daily routine "[18] He wanted the currency of money to replaced by labour. In fact, in his very first speech at the Sarvodaya Conference at Shivarampalli in Hyderabad in April 1951 he disclosed that the inmates of the Sevagram Ashram had resolved not to make use of

money from and after January 1, 1952[19] But in complex conditions of modern economic life it is unthinkable how we shall be able to do without money unless we go back to the age old barter economy which Vinobaji wants to avoid[20]

HIS VIEWS ON CEILING ON LAND

He does not want a ceiling on land to be fixed by the state so that more land may be available for distribution to the landless Replying to a suggestion for fixing such a ceiling he said in Bihar that "in a building the floor comes first and is more important than the ceiling, so also in regard to the distribution of land we must first fix the lowest limit of the land that a cultivators should own"[21] This argument is more plausible than sound In fact, the question of fixing a ceiling on the holding of land has become imperative in the present context of our agricultural life Even theoretically the arguments for it are unassailable as the amount of land which has to be distributed to the people is limited But Vinobaji has evaded this issue Actually there should be a minimum as well as maximum limit on the holding of land

CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Mahatma Gandhi who was highly impressed by Ruskin's 'Unto this last' translated this phrase in Gujrati as 'Sarvodaya' which means the good of all But it may be argued that no individual or government can do good to everybody Any single measure would do good and harm to a number of people simultaneously It has been rightly said that one man's meat is another man's poison However, godly an individual or government may be, he or it can do good at the most to the majority only But the Bhoodan worker would reply that just as in the family we try to give his or her due to every member, similarly in society also we would do the same This argument may be rebutted in two ways Firstly, in family also it is not possible to do good to all Suppose a house catches fire and it is not possible for the parents to save all their children, then they would try to save the child or children whom they love most[22] If the parents are not able to send all their sons abroad for foreign education, they would send the most promising of all. Secondly, it is wrong

to apply family ethics to the social field as a whole In the family there is natural love between members which feeling is absent in the state The saying that blood is thicker than water will bear any amount of repetition To treat all humanity or even people living in a state as one family would be nothing short of idealism. But then it may also be said in its favour that it would be desirable to keep it as an ideal and try to approximate to it as much as possible

It may also be pointed out that it is not an entirely new movement Such a movement sponsored by some humanist thinkers and religious leaders and flourish under the name of Christian Socialism before the advent of Karl Marx These Utopian socialist believed in the philosophy of the 'change of heart' But this spiritual approach to the problems of removal of social misery and degradation did not cut much ice From the very beginning the movement was foredoomed to failure It would really be a matter for surprise if the Bhoodan movement in India meets with a better fate B T Ranadive pointedly remarks : "No movement which bypasses the laws of social struggle and ignores economic realities and cocflicts arising from them can achieve anything in the direction of social change"[23] Vinobaji's method does not rule out legislation altogether but he says that it would come after a psychological change has been brought about in the people

It may also be pointed out that the Bhoodan movement is an experiment in human nature Vinobaji himself said at Warangal in 1951 "This Bhoodan Yagna is an application of non-violence, an experiment in transformation of life itself" Since the dawn of human civilization there have been two views regarding human nature—the idealist and the realist The idealist has painted human nature as godly and rational and the realist has painted it as, for the most part, irrational and even beastly No doubt, recent psychology has given us some clue to the understanding of human nature But to go to either extreme would not be desirable and would lead to dogmatism It would, therefore, be desirable to start with an open mind and to investigate afresh the basic qualities of human nature In fact, Vinobaji deserves all credit for the much needed scientific approach After all, human nature may not prove so fixed and immutable as many so-called realists believe

In favour of the movement it may also be said that Vinobaji believes that Bhoodan and Gramdan would promote peace which is a very desirable objective, although it may be pointed out that he is too optimistic in this Vinobaji also rightly places emphasis on the abolition of private property, although the means which he would adopt for the purpose may not lead to the desired goal Taking a favovrable view, it may be regarded as creating a psychological environment in which the state may find it easier to abolish or restrict private property in land through legislation It may thus help and strengthen the hands of the state in establishing an equitable social and economic order Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan has pointed out that he does not want to suggest that Sarvodaya is the last word in social philosophy "But," he says, "I do believe that Sarvodaya represents a distinct advance over the existing social philosophies and systems "[24] With regard to the future of the movement he says "We may not live to see that consummation ourselves, but I feel confident that if the world were ever to reach the port of peace and freedom and brotherhood, socialism must eventually merge into Sarvodaya [25] The progress of the movement has been rather slow and halling, although in the beginning it gave hope of miraculous results As R P Masani pointed out "There was a good start and fair progress for a time After that the movement appears to have lost its momentum "[26] Vinobaji wanted to secure five crore acres of land by 1957 But he failed to do so Moreover, a large part of the land which he has received is either uncultivable or is under disputed possession Critics are not wanting who go to the extent of saying that as Vinobaji was collecting land or distribution to the landless a large number was being added to the list of landless persons. Even the various Five Year Plans have made no serious efforts to benefit landless lobourers directly

CONCLUSION

The Bhoodan movement is an idealistic approach to life It tends to ignore the selfish nature of man which it paints as godly and full of goodwill and generosity Vinobaji believes that social transformation would lead to the transformation of the individual Thus he seems to put the cart before the horse But there is no fixed human nature If it is denied that man is selfish, it cannot be

conclusively proved that he is selfless In fact, recent psychologists and sociologists have discovered both kinds of examples In the words of one writer, "Bhoodan movement is surely paving the way for a speedy and satisfactory land reform to be followed by Government legislation in due course Vinoba's land movement is indeed, the only effective counterblast to the communist activities in India"[27] But, however, taking a balanced view, it may be remarked that there is nothing harmful in the movement which may at any rate be regarded as supplementary to the parliamentary method of effecting social and economic reform In the end it may also be pointed out that situated as we are at present, the Sarvodaya philosophy seems impossible to implement, although the Bhoodan and Gramdan movement, which is its practical aspect, are essentially a psychological experiment and its success should be carefully watched by all those who are interested improving the lot of the common man.

Notes and References

1 R P Masani calls him "the most remarkable sage of the country' *The Five Gifts* (Comet Books) p 192

2 Foreword to R.P Masani, "*The Five Gifts*' In the opinion of B T Ranadive "Vinobaji's ideology represents an extension and application of Gandhian ideology to the solution of social problems under a national government" See his article on Sarvodaya in *New Age*, Vol VIII, No 8 (August 1958) p 1

3 In one of his post-prayer speeches in Bihar Vinobaji visualized the future order of things thus 'We want an order of society which will be free not only from Exploitation but also from every governmental authority The power of government will be decentralized and distributed among the villages Every village will be a State in itself, the centre will have only nominal authority over them In this way, gradually, we will reach a stage when authority in every form will have become unnecessary and will, therefore, fade away giving rise to a perfectly free society' Quoted by Suresh Rambhai, *Vinoba and His Mission*, p 209.

4 Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan says that there is difference between the thinking of many people who believe in decentralization and the Sarvodaya conception of decentralization In his own words, "it will be a delegation of rights from below and not delegation from above" See his the Sarvodaya Way of Human Development' in *The New Socialist*, Vol I, No 5 (March, 1958) p 15

5 Jaya Prakash Narayan says that the village communities would act on the basis of "general consnsus of opinion' See his the Sarvodaya Way of

Human Development' in *The New Socialist, op cit*, p 15
6 *The Five Gifts* (Comet Books), Preface, p 7
7. Quoted by Suresh Ramabhai, *Vinoba and His Mission*, p 168
8 *Ibid*. p 210
9 This Unique incident took place on April 18, 1951
10 Italics mine
11 Quoted by Suresh Ramabhai, *Vinoba and His Mission*, p 77
12 Quoted by R P Masani, *The Fivc Gifts, op cit*, p. 116
13 His article on 'Sarvodaya' in *New Age, op cit*, pp 9-10
14 Article on 'Sarvodaya' in *New Age, op cit*, p 14
15 Quoted by R P Masani, *The Five Gifts, op cit*, p 97
16 Quoted by Suresh Rambhai, *Vinoba aud His Mission*, p 155
17 'My parting of Ways'—IV in *The Amrit Bazar Patrika*, (First Dak Edition) dated November 4, 1957
18 Quoted by R P Masani, *The Five Gifts, op cit* pp 6, 7
19 Suresh Rambhai, *Vinoba and His Mission, op cit*, p 30
20 *Ibid*, p 61
21 Quoted by R P Masani, *The Five Gifts, op cit*, p 90
22 In 'Uchhange Jataka' there is a story that when king Brahmadutt was ruling over Varanasi three persons were tilling a field near the forest At that time some thieves ran across the field The king's soldiers chasing the thieves caught these three men who were sent to jail Then a lady presented herself before the king and prayed for the release of all of them The king enquired as to whom she liked most so that he may be released She requested the king to release her brother, if he could not order the release of all She said "Your Majesty ! the son is in my lap and husbands are available everywhere on the way but hardly do I see the land which can provide me with a real brother "
23 Quoted by Suresh Rambhai, *Vinoba and His Mission*, Shri Jai Prakash Narayan has confirmed the empirical basis of the movement He says "My brief experience was exhilarating beyond expectation Within a week nearly seven thousand acres of land were obtained from gifts—most of them spontaneous and from small holders—announced at my meetings" *See* his 'My Parting Ways' in *Amrita Bazar Patrika* Allahabad dated November 5, 1957
24 'My Parting of Ways'-I—in *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Allahabad 1957
25 *Ibid*
26 *The Five Gifts, op cit*, 176
27 S N Agarwal, *Modern Review*, Calcutta, March 1953, p 195

21

GANDHI AND VINOBA

H S.L Polak

In my early years with Gandhi in South Africa, one of the things that impressed me most was his profound interest in and desire to serve the 'common man' among his countrymen It was the driving force that led him to identify himself completely with the Indian identured laboured who had been brought to Natal to save the white landowners from ruin after the abolition of slavery Though, at the beginning, the *satyagraha* struggle concerned mainly the Indian traders, when I was asked to go to India on their behalf, in 1909, he pressed me to persuade the government of India and leaders of all the Indian communities to have the system of indentured labour emigration to South Africa ended. Later, during the first world war, when I joined him and Dinabandhu Andrews in the campaign to end the system throughout the Empire, he threw himself heart and soul into the struggle

He knew that this system was rooted in the poverty, ignorance and social impotence of the villagers, and in our frequent talks on economic and social conditions in India, I understood how urgently he felt the need to improve those conditions, non-violently, as speedily as possible I had realised then the enormous difficulties inherent in the fact that in the India of the day there were more villages than could be visited at the rate of one a day—if communnications permitted—within the entire Christian era.

Moreover, notwithstanding flood, famine and disease, the Indian population was increasing rapidly year by year, with economic consequences that made all efforts for improvement already made, in the average villager's conditions, seem futile

Another matter that had for long caused much concern to him was the break-down of the village community-life, upon which so much of Indian culture in past centuries had depended, and he often told me that, upon his return to his motherland, he would do everything in his power to attempt to restore the village life

In the years that followed, the greater part of his activities, outside of the political field, lay in this direction, so that the villager, whatever his status or caste, would be able to cultivate and maintain himself and his family upon his own plot of land, and that he might raise his economic standard by the creation or restoration of village-industry, mostly handicraft

Among his many disciples and colleagues, it is doubtful if any was as inspired or inspiring as the great man who is today known throughout India and, indeed, far beyond the sub-continent as Acarya Vinoba Bhave His land-gift movement and later his *gramdan* (village-gift) movement have done much to solve national and social problems in India by non-violent and co-operative measures These have appealed to all sections of the people, who have given his devoted mission and life of sacrifice their enthusiastic support Gifts of individual plots to landless peasants were useful and encouraging in the earlier days of Acarya Bhave's activities But the *gramdan* movement has gone considerably beyond this and, as President Rajendra Prasad has pointed out in his address to the recent conference in Mysore, it is a voluntary effort, and this voluntary character is its essential feature It is not an official activity and it is fundamentally necessary that it should not become dependent upon the government, however much interested in its progress latter may be Co-operative farming under the auspices of the village communities as a whole should do much to advance village welfare and to restore the village-unit to its early basic status in Indian society

By his modesty and humble efforts, his long years of courageous self-sacrifice, his unconquerable determination, his appeal to the better nature and generosity of his fellowmen, and his

Upanisads Though Gandhiji said that he had gone to the Asram to give and not to receive, this is what Vinoba said in a talk "Only I can know what I have got in the Asram It was an early ambition of mine to distinguish myself by a violent deed in the service of the country. But Bapu cured me of that ambition. It is he who extinguished the volcano of anger and other persons in me I have been progressing every day of my life in the Asram Every year I have been making one of the *mahavratas* my own "

'And look at his way of study "I have read a lot of Samskrit", he says, "but I have not read the *Sakuntalam* The speech of the gods, which is the name of Samskrit, is for freedom—*moksa*—not for intellectual delight and luxury. I learnt Samskrit not to read the *Sakuntalam*, but to learn the *Gita*, the Vedas and Upanisads, and the *Brahmasutras*, for things that make for freedom of the soul, and not for poetry and literature Philosophy and mathematics are my subjects, not literature "

"That was what I wrote seventeen years ago, and the interval has been but a demonstration of the way in which he has translated his principles into practice, pressed all his philosophy and mathematics into the aid of the constructive program which he has believed to be the external symbol of non-violence He has trained under him students who are masters of the science and art of *khadi*-making, he has trained works who have been content with a miserable pittance to bury themselves in villages working the constructive program, and he has given, as Gandhiji has said, an ideal servant to the lepers 'Proficiency in all action' is the *Gita's* definition *yoga*, and everything that Vinoba has done proves that he is one who has mastered that *yoga* An ideal spinner, both on the wheel and the *takli* and with both the left and the right hands, he is an ideal village worker Though highly intellectual, the villagers feel completely at home with him and are enraptured by his simple perfervid eloquence full of telling homely parables and illustrations "

Real socialism has been handed to us by our ancestors who taught 'All land belongs to Gopal, where then is the boundary line ? Man is the maker of that line and he can

therefore unmake it' Gopal literally means shephered it also means God In modern language it means the state, i e , the people That the land today does not belong to the people is too true But the fault is not in the teaching. It is in us who have not lived up to it

23

VINOBA : MAN AND MESSAGE

SURESH RAM

THE GREAT QUEST

"These are the days of politics. But you say that politics is out of date now," asked a curious visitor.

"Yes, I do," replied Vinoba "Nay, both politics and religion have had their day. They were useful only until they united the people Today they divide them."

"True indeed ! Politics means rivalries and dissensions."

"It is clear that even the great Pacific Ocean which divided Asia from America is now uniting the two Science clearly warns us that anything which breaks hearts or tears them asunder would have to go "

"Then, politics has no place ?"

"You can yourself see I have framed the formulae ,

Science+Politics =Death or destruction.
Science+Spirituality=Life or Sarvodaya.

"The problems of this world would hereafter be solved not by politics, but by spirituality "

"By stressing on spirituality, you come back to religion again ?"

"No, spirituality connotes the inner core of religion. It is one and the same in all religions."

"But does it make any difference in practical life ?"

"It does You know that old religions taught mankind that

God is one Nevertheless, there were conflicts and battles between man and man in the name of religion Now spirituality tells us that not only God is one, but also *man is one* All barriers between man and man must cease to be Whatever supports these barriers and obstructs unity cannot stay "

"Should this come to be true, life would become a blessing "

"Yes, It shall be so It is the call of this Scientific Age."

"Do you hope to set up the new society of your dreams by solving the land problem ?"

"That is simply a token To tell you the truth, solving any problem is the least of my business I have frequently said that my object is to establish the Kingdom of Kindness "

"Well, kindness and compassion are there already in this world "

"They are But they don't rule They are like maidens in the realm of power and armed force or violence "

"We must work hard to bring about a transformation—a revolution in the society and set up new values and sanctions to establish the Kingdom of Kindness "

Unity of Life

Life in our society has been strangely divided into two sections, viz , one guided by self-interest (*swartha*) and the other by social interest (*parmartha*) The duties of an ascetic get thereby seperated from those of house-holder It is given to the latter to earn his livelihood and a mass wealth, while the former's is to roam about preaching sermons and depend for his subsistence on the householder Likewise, the soldier's functions were demarcated from those of the saint Thus the householders and the soldier enjoyed every freedom to employ any means (including falsehood and violence), while the ascetic or the saint had to asbtain from manual work and body-lobour

Mahatma Gandhi broke this dismal tradition and held the said divisions as ill-conceived and false He believed in the unity of life and showed that truth and non-violence were not cloistered virtues meant for a few ascetics and that body labour should not be confined to the householder He held that both the ascetic and the householder must observe the tenets of truth and non-violence in their life and perform physical as *Yajna* He further

understanding of the material and moral deeds of the poorest of the poor, Acarya Bhave has set a magnificent example to his fellow-citizens and has raised the good name of India to great heights

22

TWO PORTRAITS OF VINOBA

N.K MAHADEVAN

Unfolding his plan of individual civil disobedience, in the 20 October 1940 issue of *Harijan*, Gandhi wrote this 'thumb-nail sketch' of Vinoba Bhave by way of introducing him to the nation :

> "Who is Vinoba Bhave ? He is an undergraduate, having left college after my return to India in 1916 He is a Samskrt scholar He joined the *Asram* almost at its inception He was among the first members. In order to better qualify himself he took one year's leave to proseute further studies in Samskrt And practically at the same hour at which he had left the Asram a year before he walked into it without notice I had forgotten that he was due to arrive that day He has taken part in every menial activity of the Asram, from scavenging to cooking. Though he has a marvellous memory and is a student by nature, he has devoted the largest part of his time to spinning, in which he has specialised as very few have He believes in universal spinning being the central activity which will remove the poverty in the villages and put life into their deadness Being a born teacher, he has been of the utmost assistance to Ashadevi in her development of the scheme of education through handicrafts. Sri Vinoba has produced a text-book taking spinning as the handicraft. It is original in conception He has made scoffers realise that spinning is the handicraft *par excellence* which lends

itsef to being effectively used for basic education He has revolutionised *takli*-spinning and drawn out its hitherto unknown possibilities For perfect spinning probably he has no rival in all India

"He has abolished every trace of untouchability from his heart He believes in communal unity with the same passion that I have In order to know the best mind of Islam he gave one year to the study ot the Quran in the original He therefore learnt Arabic He found this study necessary for cultivating a living contact with the Muslims living in his neighbourhood

"He has an army of disciples and workers who would rise to any sacrifice at his bidding. He is responsible for producing a young man who dedicated himself to service of lepers. Though an utter stranger to medicine, this worker has by singular devotion mastered the method of treatment of lepers and is now running several clinics for their care Hundreds owe their cure to his labours He has now published a handbook in Marathi for the treatment of lepers Vinoba was for years director of the Mahila Asram in Wardha His devotion to the cause of *daridrandrayan* took him first to a village near Wardha, and now he has gone still further and lives in Pavnar, five miles from Wardha, from where he has established contact with villagers through the disciples he has trained

"He believes in the necessity of the political independence of India He is an accurate student of history But he believes that real independence of the villagers is impossible without the constructive program of which *khadi* is the centre He believes that the *carkha* is the most suitable outward symbol of non-violence which has become an integral part of his life He has taken an active part in the previous *satyagraha* campaigns. He has never been in the limelight on the political platform With many coworkers he believes that silent constructive work with civil disobedience in the background is far more effective than the already heavily crowded political platform And he thoroughly believes that non-violent resistance is impossible without a hearty belief in the practice of constructive work "

In the same issue, Mahadev Desai contributed a further

odd villages of India, as human nature was the same all over. With this faith and resolve, he went to his bed at about one a m

Four hours after he walked on to another village The people there received him with flowers and garlands

Thanking them for their warm hospitality, Vinoba said

> "While flowers are meant for worship, I ask for land only. I am your son, a member of your family. If you have four sons, I am the fifth Give me my share, one-fifth "

This was a very strange demand But his words had the desired effect They gave him twenty-five acres Vinoba then said to himself

> "Yesterday I got one hundred acres Today twenty-five Here are Euclid's two points and my line is complete "

Vinoba's decision was confirmed And he made a resolve to carry on his mission until landlessness was wiped out of the country Ever since, he has been incessantly on his feet During last ten years and more he has covered about forty thousand miles all over the country And he goes on ahead with firm and confident steps preaching the gospel of mutual sharing and self-reliance and universal brotherhood His refreshing look inspires hope and cheer Though constantly moving, he is like a rock of faith and light

Birth and Childhood

Vinobaji was born on September 11, 1895, at the village Gagode in the Pen tehsil (Sub-division) of Kolaba district of Maharashtra His mother Rukmini Devi, was a pure and pious woman His father, Narhari Bhave, a textile technologist, was scrupulous, methodical and straight-forward Vinoba passed a large part of his childhood with his grandfather, Shambhurao Bhave who was devout and religious and was largely responsible in giving a spiritual turn to his life

Mother's Influence

Vinoba has been deeply influenced by his mother, Rukiminibai Her God-fearing and devoted life made a deep impression on Vinoba. She used to tell him, "Vinya ! He who gives is a *Deva* (Divine), while he who keeps is a *Rakshas* (Demon) !"

Whatever new dish she prepared, she used to distribute it among the people in the neighbourhood Her Vinya acted as her faithful envoy The balance left was served for the family Sometimes the whole lot was consumed and nothing was left for the home The mother felt happy over it and asked her children to await next time Thus the spirit of sharing was imbibed in him from the very childhood

Vinoba's kith and kin looked forward towards the day when he would he married and be leading a happy family life Her mother had no interest in such gossip and used to remark, "Vinya ! while an ideal householder's life leads to repayment of *Pitri-Rina* (Fatherly debt), but an ideal Brahmacharya results in the salvation of forty generations !"

This inspired Vinoba to Brahmcharya or celibacy He resolved not to marry and to lead a dedicated life He has never regretted his decision and is the happiest man on earth today, with the whole world as his family

His mother often recited devotional songs of Marathi saints and seers Vinoba liked them very much and committed them to memory. Both the mother and child discussed religious topics Sometimes the mother was so much engrossed in them that she forget to add salt to the food Vinoba too did not worry about it and enjoyed it thoroughly But his brother complained, "There is no salt to day. How can I take it ?" Before the mother tendered her apology, Vinoba would intervene, "Strange you are ! You want food or salt ? How does the absence of salt affect your mission of life ?"

Fond of Gita, Vinoba read out its verses to his mother And both discussed about the same Rukminibai said one day, You, are always speaking of the *Gita* But my difficulty is that I am not able to follow the Sanskrit text Is there no *Gita* in Marathi ?"

Vinoba searched out a Marathi translation But that too was terse and did not do justice to the original Then his mother lovingly said, "Vinya ! You know *Gita* well Why don't you translate it in Marathi ?"

Vinoba never forgot her bidding of love But he could fulfil it in her life-time She passed away in in 1918 Twelve years later, in 1930 he translated the *Gita* into parallel Marathi verse and called it *Gitai* (Gita mother) And today *Gitai* has found its

place in almost every home and hut of Maharashtra

In Search of Brahma

At the age of ten, Vinoba came to Baroda where his father was employed He had his education there In November 1913, Vinoba passed his matriculation examination Then he joined the intermediate But he was not satisfied with this education It had no connection with real life He thought of giving it up and taking to true education of the soul

One day, Vinoba sat down by his mother who was cooking food. He had some rolled papers in his hands He lit fire to one at its end It began to burn The mother inquired

"*Vinya* ! What's it ?"

Nothing serious ! I am reducing my school and college certificates to ashes "

"But what is the harm in keeping them with you ?"

"Now that I have decided to leave college, I will never require them So why keep them at all ?"

He was on his way to Bombay in March 1916, to appear in the Intermediate examination He detrained at Surat, took the train to Bhusaval and left for Kashi

A close friend of his asked him, "Where do you go from here ?"

"To Kashi"

"What for ?"

"In search of the *Brahma*, the Imperishable and All-Pervading ! '

At Gandhiji's Ashram

Staying some two and a half months in Kashi, Vinoba came to Gandhiji and joined his Ashram on June 7, 1916 However, his health in the Ashram declined He took one year's leave

Exactly a year after, down to the very minute, Vinoba returned to the Ashram It was a pleasant surprise Bapu was very much moved by so scrupulous execution of a promise Recalling the event one day, he said to Vinoba, "It showed your loyalty to truth "

"No, it was my loyalty to Mathematics."

Bapu smiled, "Can Mathematics ever betray truth ?"

Those of the Ashram were moved by Vinoba's learning and devotion They began to admire and love him and hold him in high regard They requested him to do some teaching work for their sake, Vinoba willingly took it up.

Shortly after, Gandhiji came to know that Vinoba had not informed about his movements to his parents Consequently, he wrote a brief letter himself to Vinoba's father

> "Your son Vinoba is with me He has acquired at so tender age such high spiritedness and asceticism as took of me years of patient labour to "

(Vinoba's original name was Vinayak Narhari Bhave In keeping with the Marathi saintly tradition, Gandhiji changed it to Vinoba, the name by which he is ever since known)

In 1918, Baroda was ravaged by a terrible influenza epidemic. At Bapu's bidding, Vinoba went there to be at his mother's service Reaching home he found both the parents as also the youngest brother ill The last was the first to go and three day later, the mother also expired His father slowly recovered

Vinoba expressed a desire that the funeral hymns should not be chanted by the professional priest His father pleaded helplessness, "The family tradition has to be obeyed "

Vinoba was as much adamant He did not participate in the funeral ceremony of his mother and spent the day in reciting the *Gita* and the *Upanishads* at home Next day, he left back for the Ashram

At Wardha Ashram

In 1921, Vinoba shifted to Wardha There was opened a branch of the Sabarmati Ashram It was there that he carried on researches in Khadi and other aspects of constructive programme. But he continued his studies and penances too

One hot day, a fieree wind blew all over All mangoes, ripe and unripe, fell down from the trees It was a terrible blow to poor whose hope about the mango harvest were smashed

A villager came with his basket-load of mangoes Passing the road before the Ashram, he proceeded towards the market On the way, he met a passer-by who inquired the price of the

maintained that the soldier, too, should, instead of depending on force and coercion, rely on the superior weapon of non-violence and self-suffering He did not recognise the alleged conflict between the individual and the society (or the private and public sector) and firmly believed that the good of individual was contained in the good of all This accounts for the unique phenomenon that Gandhiji was not only a saint but also a householders, not only a reformer and politician but also a commander During the course of his historic trial in Ahmedabad, before a British Judge, he declared himself, like typical householder, to be a farmer and weaver Again,this is why he refused to go into the caves of the Himalayas for seeking the so-called bliss or salvation and instead dedicated himself to public work in the service of the masses Gandhiji took life as a whole He struck a new departure in our spiritual annals

Vinoba belongs to the same category For him, too, life is a complete and intergrated unit which cannot be divided into water-tight compartments Vinoba—a man of learning and renunciation with no family responsibility on his shoulders and with no attachment to any person, party or practice—could easily pass his days in seclusion as an ascetic But he has been leading an active public life for about the last fifty years Endowed with a compassionate heart, resourceful ability and mathematical skill, he could easily run a charitable institution for popular relief But he has been on his feet for the last ten years and has known no rest Equipped with a genius for leadership, organising talent and a band of devoted workers at his command, he could successfully launch a mighty agitation and create unrest But he has chosen a different path and has been working his way very gently and quietly In fact, he is a saint and a reformer and a revolutionary—all three combined in one

Call of Science

This is the age of science which has broken the barriers of space and distance Also science has provided man with such means as can supply all his needs, provided wealth is fairly and justly distributed It is, therefore, absurd to think in isolation these days. The personal and community interests are linked together of the fingers and the palm of the hand An aspiration for personal profit or deliverance or slavation must be regarded as

unscientific and selfish Even the phrase 'my salvation' has no meaning For, where there is a feeling of personal ownership, there can be no salvation, and where there is salvation there can be no question of personal ownership

The demand of the times is equality and comredeliness—a classless, castless and stateless society All barriers between man and man—be they of colour, class, caste, creed, party, ownership authority or State—must go The whole world is like a family in which no member can prevent another from enjoying any amenity on grounds of possession or superiority None can, therefore, rest content with mere relief or succour against misery Gone are the days when one could keep lording over his wealth and offer a bit of it in charity The period of tiny reforms and demonstrative philanthropy is over The need of the hours is to strike at the very root of the evil so that poverty, inequality and disease may become a thing of the past and all may be able to experience real happiness and brotherhood This requires a transformation of existing socio-economic and political values based on ownership and competition and exploitation The new order would stand on the three pillars of social ownership, collective productive body labour and mutual confidence and co-operation

The third characteristic is—passion for peace Science has declared from its housestops that any recourse to war would prove as disastrous for the victors as for the vanquished Both courage and wisdom demand that we must bid good-bye to arms and trust the innate goodness of man Instead of counting on force and coercion, we should rely on persuasion and conversion Any attempt to meet external aggression or internal unrest by arms and force should be regarded as narrow and unscientific, and is bound to prove futile and injurious Violence is now out of date and whatever is to be changed or achieved must be brought about only be peaceful and non-violent means As a French philosopher has said "The more violence, the less revolution" Thus the technique of revolution itself needs a revolutionary re-orientation—a process which was begun by Mahatma Gandhi and is now being further explored by Vinoba.

Need of Collective Sadhana

Welcoming the advance of science, Vinoba has been stressing upon the need ot rising above emotions and having a world outlook Man can make full and effective use of the power placed

at his disposal by science only when he gets rid of mental attachments and jealousies The traditional modes of thinking and approach have to change We have to lift ourselves up out of our mental grooves and ruts To quote Vinaba

> "The plane of *Vijnana* or science is above that of mind Science is trying to force us to ascend to that higher level The *Upanishadas* knew of the plane of *Vijnana* as being higher than the vital and the mental planes But it was then a matter of individual realisation It was enough if a few individuals reached that plane through personal effort while the rest lagged behind There was no pressure of the circumstances that all should have to rise to that level of *Vijnana* Today, however, science makes it imperative on us to go beyond the mental This could be done only by spiritual effort Science, therefore, is compelling us to undertake spiritual reflection The sages of the past undertook individual spiritual effort (*Sadhana*), science demands that we should take to a collective form of the same spiritual effort (*Samoohik Sadhana*) For, only then science would benefit mankind, otherwise, we all would go to ruins "

New Religious Outlook

Science, therefore, calls upon us to change our attitude completely and think of ourselves as members of a family encompassing the whole world Our conception of religion should also change :

> "The old religions also would not work To please God by burning lamps and incense before an image would not do. The entire humanity has become a living image of God We are to worship this image We should have to enquire, for example, if mankind has enough food for it This would indeed be a drama of worshipping humanity as our God At first, it would be like stage-acting But in course of time, we would experience reality "

Thus, science and spirituality or self-knowledge (*Atmajyana*) are the two great creative powers of the modern age A careful harnessing of them will lead to universal happiness and prosperity and peace

But the great question is . How to do it in practice ? It was

basket

"Every year, the basket generally costs three rupees "

"Three rupees ! Are you in your senses ? I am just coming from the market Nobody will pay even one rupee for your load "

"I have suffered a lot this year As you please !"

"I can't pay you more than a rupee."

"Do raise something more !"

"No, go your way "

"At last, the passerby agreed for one and a quarter and got the whole lot With a heavy heart, the villager went back to his home For a while, he halted before Vinoba's cottage. Vinoba asked about his welfare and said, "You seem to be coming from the market ? Have you sold the entire lot ?"

"Yes, but I got only twenty annas !"

"Twenty annas only ! What is the proper price ?"

"Three rupees is the usual amount But the wind-blast has reduced all prices "

"But why did you give it so cheap"

"There was no alternative for me Nobody would give me three rupees and I would have to bring the load back "

Vinoba gave him a rupee and three-quarter So doing, he asked an inmate of his Ashram, "Do you agree with what I have done ? When his man is in difficulty, people should help rather than exploit the situation "

"You are correct His woes must be shared."

"But in the capitalist society, such loot is common We are not even conscious of it That is why there is so much poverty in our country, so much misery and so much discontent and betterness "

* * *

In 1923, Vinoba offered flag-satyagraha in Nagpur This was his first experience of jail life

Next year, Gandhiji sent him to Vaikom in Travancore. Harijans were not allowed entry in the temples At Gandhiji's instance, a satyagraha was launched Vinoba conducted it The Satyagrahis suffered all sorts of suffering and humility with cheer At last the Government yielded Vinoba came back to his Ashram.

In 1932, on Gandhiji's return from the Round Table Conference, Vinoba happened to be at Jalgaon (Khandesh) He was pained to see terror gripping the people He decided to address a public meeting He did it, wherein he made a plea for fearless and self-help and assured that the British rule would not, and could not stay long This took him to jail where he was tried and convicted for six months He passed his sentence at Dhulia Jail It was here that Vinoba delivered his talks on the Gita, which in the form of *Gita-Pravachan* has appeared in the different languages of the country.

Spending some twelve years in Wardha Ashram, Vinoba shifted to the village of Nalwadi There he started work in the surrounding villages For twenty-five days in a month he lived in the villages, and for five days he stayed in the Ashram He founded a new institution, Gram Seva Mandal

Here he also made experiments on the potentialities of spinning He used to spin for eight hours a day He kept his personal expenditure below the amount so earned That came to less than four annas He reduced his diet accordingly This affected his health considerably When Gandhiji came to know about it, he was deeply agitated He sent word, "Now I will have to take your complete charge."

Gandhiji thought of sending Vinoba to some hilly resort so that he might recoup his health Various suggestions were offered —Simla, Mussoorie, Mahabaleshwar, etc Gandhiji told him "You can go anywhere you like "

"I have chosen my place."

"Which one ?"

"I will go and live in the house built at the desolated hillock-like piece of land across the Paunar river "

"I have no objection You are the best judge "

Vinoba gave it the significant name of *Paramdham Ashram* which has remained his head quarters even since Within three months of his settling down at Paunar, he gained 32 lbs in weight

First Satyagrahi

The Second Great War began in September 1939 Without her consent, India was thrown into it India could not be a party to such a war whose aims were not clear The Indian National

Congress decided to *offer Saryagraha* against this injustice and empowered Gandhiji to take the desired steps

Gandhiji decided upon launching *Individual Satyagraha* and selected Vinoba for the task He went to his Paramdham Ashram and said ·

"I have your name in my mind as the first Satyagrahi."

"As you like, I am at your disposal "

"The question, however, is whether you are ready to take it up "

"Bapu, I am !"

"But you must be pre-occupied with so many activities of your Ashram I wonder whether you will be able to free yourself from them "

"I carry no load on my head I am as much prepared to obey your call here and now even is I would be if the *Yamraja* had sent for me straight !"

Gandhiji announced Vinoba's name as the first Satyagrahi. Vinoba offered Satyagraha on 17th October 1940 He was arrested and sentenced to three months simple imprisonment On release, he again offered Satyagraha and courted arrest Gandhiji selected Shri Jawaharlal Nehru as the second Satyagrahi Others followed Thus the movement spread on By the close of 1941, there was general amnesty

It was the summer of 1942 Gandhiji had given the call of "Quit India " The whole country was astir A great movement was in the offing Gandhiji was thinking of ways and means of having a nation-wide campaign In a meeting of Sevagram Ashram workers and close friends, he gave the hint that he proposed to undertake a long duration fast on entering the Jail The audience was taken aback Somebody suggested that Vinoba should be consulted Bapu sent for him

Vinoba came immediately Bapu asked his opinion on the proposed step

Without a moment's pause, Vinoba

"Such a sacrifice is permissible in non-violence "

And with a smile, he added, "What *Ram* can do in the wake of reason, *Hanuman* can do by sheer faith "

"If you like you can take your own time to think over it,"

remarked Bapu

"No, Bapu! There is nothing to think further about it My mind is quite clear I am entirely with you,"

And Vinoba took Bapu's leave at once All those present were staggered at this spontaneous agreement between the master and the disciple

8th August, 1942 The Congress passed the historic "Quit India" resolution Next day, Gandhiji and other leaders all over the country were arrested Vinoba was also arrested in his Paunar Ashram and taken to Wardha Jail

On entering the jail, Vinoba said to the jailor, "I have had my food for the day And from tomorrow morning I go on an indefinite fast"

The jailor was stunned He wondered whether some thing in jail had led Vinoba to this drastic step

> "Please do let me know what made you adopt such an unusual course"
>
> "Nothing in connection with your jail But Gandhiji had decided to begin fast after his arrest and I share his decision"

The jailor felt helpless

Gandhiji, however, had not begun his fast as he was in correspondence with the Government Nevertheless, he was sure that Vinoba would have commenced his fast in the Jail So soon after his arrest, Bapu sent a message to Vinoba not to undertake the fast since he had postponed it for the present

The news came as a highly welcome relief to the Wardha jail authorities For full three years, Vinoba was in jail

Vinoba is a very eminent linguist Marathi is his mother-tongue And so almost also are Gujarati and Hindi He has acquired more than a working knowledge of Urdu, Bengali, Assamese, Oriya and Punjabi He kuows well all the four languages of South India—Tamil, Telugu, Kannarese and Malayalam English of course, he studied in the college French was his second language there His profound command over Sanskrit which he acquired after leaving the college is next, if at all, only to that over Marathi He has a genius for learning languages At the age of forty-six, he studied Arabic and went through the

holy *Koran* several times The wisdom of all religious classics is almost at his finger tips Recently he picked up German and some Japanese too

After Swaraj

Soon after the attainment of Swaraj, Gandhiji passed away It turned people's eyes towards Vinoba for guidance In March 1948, a meeting of eminent constructive workers, political leaders and Gandhiji's close associates, was held at Sevagram under the presidentship of Dr Rajendra Prasad, now the President of our Republic Among other things, they decided to start, at Vinoba's suggestion, a *Sarvodaya Samaj*—a sort of brotherhood of those believing in the practice of truth and non-violence

Vinoba was persuaded to take up the most burning question of the day—the rehabilitation of refugees, and to convey to them the message of peace and hope Accordingly, Vinoba reached Delhi on 30th March 1948 He spent about ten months among the refugees and tried, as a Satyagrahi, to wean their mind of bitterness and distrust He worked amongst them in Delhi, East Punjab and Rajasthan, as also at Kalyan and the Bombay suburbs On 30th January 1949, first anniversary of Bapu's departure, he addressed at Rajghat his last prayer meeting during that sojourn and decided to have a look at the whole country He travelled by train and visited the States of U P, Rajasthan, Bombay Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nad, Kerala and Andhra

Kanchan-Mukti

On return from Andhra in October, he decided to lead a life of labour and turned himself into a labourer The acute food situation of the country also necessitated such a step At his inspiration the members of Paramdham Ashram (Pavnar) resolved to purchase no vegetables from the market from 1st January 1950 and to use only such vegetables as they could produce by their labour in the Ashram

The name given to this programme was *Kanchan Mukti* (literally, freedom from gold,) whose object was to get rid of the slavery of money in life and to investigate the potentialities, social, economic, intellectual and moral, of productive physical labour intelligently performed Their experiment was carried on successfully by a band of selfless workers for for more than three

years until April 1953, when Vinoba called them away for a concerted Bhoodan Yajna drive in Bihar.

On 8th October 1950, Vinoba undertook a three day fast While beginning it, he said

> "My life has so far been the life of a *Bihkshuka* (medicant) In future also I have to live on charity But I have now resolved to accept alms of body labour only I shall of course continue to do physical labour my-self to the best of my capacity "

The third annual session of the Sarvodaya Samaj was scheduled to be held at Shivarampalli, about four miles from Hyderabad city in April 1951 They urged upon Vinoba to attend this meeting

On 8th March 1951, Vinoba left his Paramdham Ashram on foot for Shivarampalli Walking ten to twelve miles every day, he reached Shivarampalli on 7th April for the annual Sarvodaya conference Eight days later, on the day of *Ramnavami*, 15th April 1951, he commenced his walking tour of Telangana

THE BHOODAN GANGA

"Here, in our village, are two real brothers who are always at daggers drawn and because of them the whole village is torn with dissensions", said a heart-broken old man

"They should cast off their differences and live like real brothers," observed Vinoba

"Several years have passed in conflict One of the brothers is the Congress and supports Government, while one other has joined the Communist Party They have wasted thousands of rupees in litigation The village has been partitioned into two groups and has been ruined "

"I shall see both of them "

Later, Vinoba called them and had a talk They were pretty old He asked one of them

"How long do you hope to live ?"

"My one leg is in the grave and the second one is here I am very weak and may go any day "

Then he inquired of the other ,

"What about you ?"

"I also feel likewise"

"Then why all this quarrel ?"

"I shall do your bidding, Baba !"

"Will you obey the decision of the village elders or *Panches* ?"

"I shall"

"And so shall I," said the other one

Vinoba brought the two together and they held each other in close embrace Tears trickled down their eyes They sobbed like children and begged each other's apology

In the evening meeting, Vinoba called them on to the dais He said, "Until yesterday they fought among themselves like Bhima and Jarasandh But today they have resolved that differences and will live like brothers hereafter"

Again they embraced each other Also they announced a donation of ninety acres of land

Work in Telangana

Thus Vinoba's *yatra* in Telangana was a source of great relief to the people It had a healing and refreshing effect During this tour of 51 days, from 15th April to 6th June 1951, Vinoba received 12,201 acres of land for the landless What Vinoba saw and felt in Telangana unfolded before his mind's eye the latent strength of soul force As he said

> "As I went on with the campaign, each day that passed brought our hidden meanings and disclosed new possibilities of this movement Thus I grew in my own understanding of its vast potentialities and had, what I may call a vision, a new revelation of the power of non-violence"

Back from Telangana, Vinoba quietly settled down to his *Kanchan-Mukti* work Bhoodan was in the news and all sorts of coments were coming from various quarters They were appreciative as well as critical The main criticism was that Bhoodan could not be a universal phenomenon and that the donations from the terror-struck rich of Telangana were more in the nature of an attempt to save themselves than of a change in heart They threw a challenge to Vinoba to testify to the truth of his faith in any other part of the country. Vinoba calmly went through all

criticism He gave no reply For he believes in silent action, not in mere words

Opinion on the First Plan

His agony at the fast deteriorating social and economic situation of the country was contionuously increasing The fever which had seized him in Telangana was ceaselessly hurting his soul And when Sri R K Patil, his old friend and a member of the National Planning Commission, called on him at Pavnar on August 10, 1951, to gather his impressions on the Draft Report of the First Five Year Plan prepared by the Government of India, Vinoba could contain himself no longer and burst forth

> "In the Constitution you have promised work and food to all citizens But now you have totally forgotten this assurance If you, on whose shoulders lies the responsibility of providing work to all, find it impossible to do so, you must resign
>
> "You ask village industries to support themselves You first cut off my feet and then want me to stand Village industries did not die themselves, they have deliberately been killed , Why don't you think that when Gandhiji could do so much in those adverse days, we should be able to do much more ?
>
> "You took a pledge of acquiring food self-sufficiency by 1951 When you find it unrealisable you start a Planning Commission which says that self-sufficiency is well-nigh impossible Do you even imagine what would befall your country if war comes ?
>
> "Yours is a plan involving perpetual begging It cannot inspire anybody to produce more "

Prime Minister's Invitation

Having come to know these views, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to Vinoba that he wished to see him in order to discuss the Plan Vinoba accepted the invitation He decided and resolved to start for Delhi on foot on September 12, 1951

Addressing a large gathering at Pavnar in his post-prayer meeting on the previous evening (September 11) he said

> "The work I have started is known as the *Bhoodan Yajna*

It is not simply *Bhoodan* It is a *Yajna* in which all should co-operate and contribute

"If it is regarded that land could be obtained in Telangana because it was a Communist-infected area, we must abandon all hope of a non-violent revolution in India If we grasp the fundamental idea behind this *Yajna*, I hope the rich will honour the poor and donate land to me In case this hope is realised it will lend a mighty support to the non-violent revolution "

Then and there he was presented with 75 acres of land What a remarkable birthday-gift ! Next morning he commenced his march to Delhi

The Demand of Daridra-Narayan

Vinoba covered 12 to 16 miles every day. Reaching Nagpur on September 15, Vinoba put his life-mission in these few words

"Till God keeps strength in me I shall tour the country and beg for the landless Land, like air and water, cannot be individually owned It can only be God's. It is the common property of the people and should be equitably distributed."

On October 2, 1951, Vinoba reached Sagar, a University town in northern Madhya Pradesh As it was the last important halt in that State, constructive workers from all over the State had gathered for a conference Addressing them he said

"The mission I have undertaken is an act of devotion and service not only of the poor but also of the rich—of all the people I have a strong conviction that this work is going to appeal to all "

Placing before the country his demand for five crores acres of land by 1957—his *Five Year Plan* he declared .

"Though my own stomach is very small, that of the *Daridranarayan* is very big So if any one me as what my demand is, I say, 'Five Crore Acres of Land' I mean thereby cultivable land If there are five sons in the family, I want to be considered the sixth, if four, the fifth Thus I claim one-fifth or one-sixth of the total cultivable land

in the country "

In Delhi

Vinoba reached Delhi on November 13, 1951 During his 62 days' Yatra of 792 miles from Pavnar to Delhi, he obtained 19,436 acres He had his hut near Gandhiji's *Samadhi* at Rajghat

Vinoba introduced himself in Delhi's populace at the proverbial *Vaman* who covered the earth in three steps So also his three steps are

> "What I want the people to do is, first to part with some of their land Secondly, they should engage themselves in the service of others Finally, in their service they should give up all and voluntarily sacrifice everything This is the path into which I want to initiate the people "

Vinoba met members of the Planning Commission for three consecutive days To quote his own words

> "During these three days of discussion I have placed my ideas before them They have promised to consider my suggestions I had several grounds for my criticism, but I would not go into them all
>
> "There were two major differences The first was I wanted no food imparts while according to the Planning Commission's Report there are to be imports for an indefinite period Secondly, I wanted a Policy of full employment for all The Planning Commission have agreed to it as their duty, but they say they cannot, under present circumstances, undertake it In my opinion there can be no national planning without it It is only when they accept this responsibility, they can develop the villages and make them self-sufficient "

Thus carrying on his mission for eleven days in the capital, Vinoba left it in the early hours of the morning of November 24,1951 The Bhoodan Ganga turned towards Uttar Pradesh

A Unique Gift

At the village of Chaudahapur in the Moradabad district, a

blind man, Ram Charan by name, helped by a family-boy, reached Vinoba's camp after mid-night at 1 a m All were asleep Perchance one worker in the camp got up and inquired of the blind man what brought him there, He said, "I am told that here is a Baba who accepts land-gifts for the poor I have got but twelve bighas of land which I want to donate to him," The gift deed (*Dan Patra*) was filled in by the worker and Ram Charan's finger-print taken on it There-after, the earnest doner walked back to his village, six miles off Vinoba came to know of it next morning Referring to this incident in his evening address he remarked

> "They say that Ram Charan was blind But, in fact, it is we who are blind We should know that in Ram Charan's form, the *Charan* (Feet) of *Ram* (God) come to bless the *Bhoodan Yajna* "

Resolve of 25 Lakhs

At Sevapuri on April 13, 14, 15 and 16 was held the fourth annual *Sammelan* (Session) for *Sarvodaya Samaj*, presided over by the late Sri Srikrishnadas Jaju whose life was a dedication to she cause of Khadi Total land collected in the country by that time amounted to 1,02,361 acres, obtained from 4,936 donors The session was inaugurated by Acharya J B Kripalani Sri Shankarrao Deo, secretary of the *Sarvodaya Samaj* and of the Sarva Seva Sangh, placed a resolution before the Sammelan calling upon for a collection of 25 lakhs of acres of land in Bhoodan Yajna within two years as a first instalment to fulfil Vinoba's demand of five crores, towards establishing a classless and exploitation-free society of the basis of truth and non-violence

The Sevapuri Sammelan registered a landmark in the growth and development of the Bhoodan Yajna movement It now assumed an all India character and its message thereafter began to be conveyed to every nook and corner of the country Quotas for various provinces were fixed and committees were found to take up the work Vinoba who had already covered thirty-five districts of U P , started for the remaining ones.

Dharma Chakra Pravartan

On May 9th, Vinoba was at Lucknow, the capital of U P It was the *Buddha Jayanti* day In his post-prayer address he declared .

"The work I am made to do is the contribuation of the *Dharma Chakra Pravartan*—revolving the *Wheel of Dharma*, which the Buddha had started And mark what I pronounce with the same commanding voice as that of the lion which drowns all other smaller voices and rings clear across the forest *The land has already come to me, it has already gone to the landless It remains for you only to choose the manner of effecting the transfer* "

Response in Bihar

On 14th September 1952, Vinoba set his foot on the soil of Bihar He said

"As a pilgrim goes to *Tirtha-Yatra* for God's *darshan*—so also I have come out on this Bhoodan pilgrimage I have come here to let you bring about a revolution on the basis of love I have a desire that the land problem of Bihar should be solved during my stay here I am talking of the solution of the land problem But far more important is working the non-violent method If we are able to solve the land problem by the method of love and peace, it would earn credit for non-violence Could non-violence succeed in attianing economic revolution, what else would it not be able to achieve ? I have complete faith in the power of non-violence "

Vinoba spent 27 months in Bihar The message of Bhoodan was conveyed to the innermost corners of this province The movement met with remarkable response

Tragedy at Baidyanathdham

That the poison of untouchability has deeply entered our life became painfully clear on 18th September 1953 Vinoba encamped at Baidyanathdham, Bihar's most important pilgrimage centre in the Santhal Parganas district He also stayed there on the 19th on account of the meetings of workers from all over Bihar In the evening of the 18th, he was requested by the head priest of the temple to pay a visit to the holy shrine When he was told that Vinoba could enter a temple only if Harijans were also allowed to have the *darshan*, the priest gave his consent to Harijans accompanying Vinoba Accordingly, on the evening of the 19th, Vinoba and

colleagues, accompanied by a few Harijans, went to the Baidyanath Temple But hardly had he gone a few steps, the *pandas* of the Temple who were waiting for him, fell upon Vinoba and his party with *lathis* amidst cries of "*Dharma ki Jai ho ! Adhharma ka Nash ho !*" (Long live religion ! Down with irreligion !) Members of his party tried to cordon off Vinoba Even so he was slightly injured at the ear Two members of the party, one of them a young woman worker of eighteen, were very severely beaten up and had to be removed to the hospital Next day he issued a statement to the press in the course of which he observed

> "I do not want anybody to be punished . . But the Constitution of free India has been clearly violated Small retributive measures cannot make up for that transgression. What is needed is to provide against any recurrence of such incidents in future This is an age of science Every faith is being tested on the touch-stone of reason "

By 25th March 1954, land-collections amounted to 27,53,465 acres The resolve made at Sevapuri was thus fulfilled. The Sarvodaya Sammelan met at Bodh-Gaya on April 18, 19 and 20, 1954 It was presided over by Smt Ashadevi Aryanaykam, a distinguished educationist and exponent of Nai-Talim In this Sammelan, Sri Jayaprakash Narayan made the solemn announcement—of JIWANDAN, offering his life for the Bhoodan cause

During his Gaya-Yatra, Vinoba upon the idea of opening a centre synthesising the *Vedanta* of the *Upanishads* and the *Ahimsa* of the Budha He called it *Samanvaya Ashram.*

Once in Bihar, a Muslim noble saw Vinoba one day He had already donated 5,500 acres of land He gave further 1,500 acres to Vinoba that day "You have", said Vinoba, "offered all the uncultivated land with you Now as my right, I demand one-sixth of your land under-cultivation "

> "I agree to your claim," spoke he very politely "But in our Muslim families, women have also their right And we are five brothers and two sisters "
> "Then I become the eighth in your family", put in Vinoba, "and I want one-eighth "
> "Very gladly so."
> And he signed the *Dan-patra* accordingly. Later he

observed "This mission of yours is in keeping with Islam which enjoins such gifts as duty Your demand is a righteous one God willing, the country would fulfil your mission "

Both the rich and the poor of Bihar offered donations to Vinoba The total amounted to 22,32,474 36 acres from 2,86,420 donors The credit goes to the late Sri Laxmi Babu and his band of devoted workers

Towards Land-Revolution

Vinoba left Bihar on 1st January 1955 and spent 25 days in the Bankura and Midnapore districts of Bengal He impregnated the workers of Bengal with a spirit to give *Vande Mataram* a practical shape by securing land for every tiller Recalling the exhortation of the great poet, Rabindranath Tagore, to love the neighbour and live the ideal of *Vande Bhartam*, he stressed the urgency of Bhoodan Further, he summoned all public servants of Bengal to stand up like one man to make Swami Vivekananda's (the wizard who gave India the word *DaridraiNarayan*) dream a living reality and work to wipe out *Daridrya* (poverty) from the country so that *Narayan* might remain all over

On 26th January 1955, he stepped into Orissa and gave a call for *Bhoomi-Kranti* .

"The work to be done now is that of *Bhoomi-Kranti* (land revolution) Merely giving land to the landless is not sufficient Private land-ownership is to be abolished Land can only be God's or of the society If the people at any price live this idea, it would amount to the *poornata* (completeness) of Bhoodan Yajna Thereafter the work of obtaining five crores and distributing it would become very easy The people themselves would take it up I therefore, expect a *paripoorna darshan* (complete view) in Orissa "

It may be called that the first Gram-dan was offered on 24th May 1952 The people of Mangroth in the Hamirpur district of U P donated all their land In Orissa, thanks to its indefatigale workers, led by the late Sri Gopabandhu Choudhary and his devout consort Smt Ramadevi, *Gramdans* were offered in large numbers.

On 12th May, 1955, Vinoba was at the small village of Baripada in the Ganjam district of Orissa In the evening prayer, there was a large gathering, consisting of unsophisticated peasantry They were eager to know what message the walking *messiah* had brought for them

With a firm voice, in his charming Oriya patois, Vinoba asked them :

"*The landlessness in our village, will now be ?*"
Loudly they replied
"*No more ! Nore more !*"

And they gave vent to their resolve by raising up their hands With a smile on his face, he rejoined ·

"*The land-ownership in our village, will now be ?*"

With a far louder, resounding voice, they burst forth

"*No more ! No more !*"

Then followed his brief address in which he said .

"That there should be no landlessness in our village is the first step And that there should be no land-ownership in our village is the last None expect God is the owner of land. We mortals can only be its children. And ours is to serve the mother-earth as we can "

This spirit caught the air, specially in the Koraput district where Vinoba stayed for four months During his Orissa tour, Vinoba had been offered 2,57,277 acres of land from 95,757 donors and 812 Gramdans

At Jagananath Temple

An event in his Orissa tour needs mention Vinoba reached the famous shrine and centre of pilgrimage of Jagananath Puri on 21st March 1955 He stayed at a spot near the sea, In the morning he went to the holy shrine for *darshan* His party included amongst others, a devoted creature of God, a pious lady from France. Whence the priests of the temple, to our shame, refused admittance to Vinoba With folded hands, he walked back, recalling the similar treatment offered to the great sage, Nanak, about the four

hundred years ago

In his post-prayer speeches on three successive days, 21st to 23rd March, Vinoba dwelt upon this episode

Warning the dangers facing Hinduism, he said

> "I believe that if Hinduism were to confine itself to its own people and cling to its narrow groove, it would give a mortal blow to its ownself and would be simply destroyed During the Vedic period, the Vedic religion expressed itself in veiled forms This was right then, but now Do we not see that hidden *mantras* of the times of yore have yielded place to open *mantras* like the names of Ram, Krishna and Hari? This is regarded as the best *Bhakti* path We must realise the secret behind these open *mantras* and be not so foolish as to spite our own face I, therefore, appeal to the authorities of the Jaganantha temple to think over this matter"

In South India

After Orissa, Vinoba began his tour ot South India He spent more than seven months in the Andhra Pradesh Next Tamil Nad Addressing a vast mass of humanity gathered at the famous Island grounds of Madras on 18th May 1956, he said

> "The Bhoodan movement is founded on the rock of love and universal brotherhood of man We in India should make a start towards our ultimate goal of oneness of the world by considering ourselves as Indians first We must rise above parochial and case distinctions Bhoodan knows no language except the language of love
>
> "I appeal to you, the people of Tamil Nad, to crown the movement with success"

The Sarvodaya Sammelan was held at Kancheepuram under the presidentship of Sri Appa Saheb Patwardhan Thereafter Vinoba undertook three day's fast .

> "I feel the necessity of greater purity and more intensive contemplation I have decided to fast for three days from 1st June to achieve this end. I want to do this party as an experiment in the hope that it will aid my prayers and the concentration necessary for clarity of thought."

It began in the morning of 1st June Vinoba broke it just after seventy-two hours A brief programme of community spinning and *bhajans* in all the Indian languages marked the occasion On 7th June, he resumed his *Yatra*

In the Madurai district of Madras State, Vinoba met with an enthusiastic response More than hundred and fifty villages were offered in Gramadan The People there are working for *Gram-Swarajya*

Resolve at Kanya-Kumari

On 15th April 1957, Vinoba was at Kanya-Kumari He went to the famous Vivekananda rock and took the following pledge

> "I solemnly pledge this day, at the feet of Kanya-Kumari, on the shore of the Indian ocean and in the presence of *Suryanaravan* (Sun God) that as long as *Gram-Swarajya* (Swaraj of the village) is not established in India I shall continue my Yatra and ceaselessly carry on the efforts in that direction. May God give me strength for the achievement of this goal !"

From Tamil Nad to Kerala In his Kerala tour, Vinoba founded the Shanti-Sena Also he received 1,571 acres of land from 224 donors Besides, 301 villages were offered in Gramdan and literature worth Rupees 15,589 was sold Addressing the Kerala workers on 23rd May 1957, the last day of his tour, he said ·

> "Gramdans began in Orissa In Tamil-Nad were laid the foundations of Gram-Swarajya I came to Kerala with this strength Here you have formed Shanti-Sena, which has further strengthened me Day by day, I feel getting stronger May God make you stronger likewise !"

Yelwal Conference

An epoch-making event of Vinoba's Karnatic Yatra is the great Gramdan conference held at Yelwal on Septemper 21 and 22, 1957 It was attended by some of the top-ranking personalities of modern India, viz , Rashtrapati Dr Rajendra Prasad, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, Sri Jayaprakash Narayan, Sri E.M S Namboodiripad and Sri U N. Dhebar Among the Important

representatives of Government were Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Sri Gulzarilal Nanda, Sri Morarji Desai and Sri S K Dey, and the Chief Ministers of the States of Bombay, Madras, Mysore and Orissa Besides, there were Sri Ganga Saran Singh (of the Praja Socialist Party), Dr Z A Ahmad (of the Communist Party of India), Sri R R Diwakar (President of the Gandhi Memorial Trust), Shri Pyarelal (formerly Secretary to Mahatama Gandhi), and Sri Sriman Narayan (the then General Secretary of the A I C C) The conference was convened by the Sarva Seva Sangh

After hearing Vinoba who traced the rise and growth of the Bhoodan movement, there was a frank and free discussion for two days At its conclusion, a *communique* was issued It closed with the words

> "At the conclusion of its two-day deliberations, the Conference expresses its high appreciation of Vinobaji's mission and his efforts to solve national and social problems by non-violent and co-operative methods, and appeals to all sections of the Indian people to give this mission their enthusiastic support."

It was in Karnataka that Vinoba first placed the idea of *Sarvodaya Patra* before the people It has since spread in the country Also he gave the new form of greeting *JAI JAGAT*

Vinoba entered Maharashtra on 23rd March 1958 At Pandharpur, the holy shrine, the priestly authorities invited him (together with all members of his Yatra group, which consisted of Muslims as well as Christians along with Hindus) to the temple and pray to the Diety Thus this great shrine, so far confined to the Hindus, declared open its gates for all human beings—the first in India to take this great step The Sarvodaya Sammelan was also held there

In the West Khandesh district, Vinoba obtained a large number of Gramdans in the Akrani and Akkalkuan talukas Thereafter Vinoba rushed on towards Kashmir First came Gujarat where he had spent ten years in his childhood and five years again as an inmate of the Satyagraha Ashram He addressed his prayer meetings in Gujarati and devout people of Gujarat felt as if their Bapu had come back to them Leaving Gujarat on

14th January, he came to Rajasthan, famous for her *bhakti* and bravery Then the entered the Punjab on April 1, 1959

In Kashmir

Spending 51 days there, he set his foot on Kashmir soil on 22nd May with the words

> "My reliance is on God alone Only His done I have come here for three things , (i) I want to see, (ii) I want to listen, and (iii) I want to love Whatever power God has given me to love, I would use it all here If it falls short, I would beg of Him for more In case I am obliged to open my mouth, I would do so only in order to love vou I don't believe in speaking Let us pray to God with all our heart "

It was in Kashmir that Vinoba gave vent to his revolutionary idea of the need for combination of science and spirituality He crossed the great mountain of Pir Panjal and on 28th July 1959, he was at Vatlab, the northernmost town in Indian territory Addressing the people there he said

> "Two and a quarter years ago I was at Kanya-Kumari, the southern tip of the land This is the northern end I have come here for the same purpose which took me to Kanya-Kumari And that purpose is—to join the hearts Before me are gathered workers belonging to different political parties The clash among themselves If two bullocks yoked to a cort come to a clash, the cart would not proceed Likewise the caravan of our nation is not making progress . My appeal to the politicians (*Siyasat-dan*) is not to become little (*Na-dan*) and I request them to unite for the sake of India's impoverished millions '

His stay in Kashmir was eventful People poured their heart before him and listened to his language of love Vinoba's study of *Koran* proved immensely helpful during this Yatra The poor inhabitants of that beautiful land recongnised him as one of their own It made a deep impression on Vinoba

> "I came (from Kashmir) with increased self-confidence. This is of two kinds. One is of that of the self and emanates

from within, other is *lok-sakshatkar*, of that of the masses and emanates from without I went to Kashmir with the former within me But I have returned equipped with the latter also and I now feel a realisation of such strength as I had not known earlier from the outer point of view "

Against Indecent Posters

Back to the Punjab, the eastern districts this time Thereafter he proceeded towards Indore through the Chambal Valley area of Madhya Pradesh Passing through the western districts of U P from April 8 to May 12, 1960, he entered the Chambal Valley—the Morena and Bhind districts The devoted labours of the late Major-General Yadunath Singh and other Shanti-Sainiks bore fruit and several dacoits presented themselves to Vinoba (as we shall see in the next Section)

On July 24, 1960 Vinoba came to Indore and stayed in this city for full one month He asked its inhabitants to make Indore a Sarvodaya City During the course of his stay in Indore, he covered every locality and met all sections of the people There his eyes fell upon indecent cinema posters displayed on the wall and in public places He called them as "free and compulsory education in sensuality," and urged upon the people to do away with them He even recommended Satyagraha for this purpose

"My views in this matter are quite clear and unambiguous. In case I were to find you or the Government careless or indifferent in this connection, I can take to Satyagraha on an all-India scale In the last ten years, I have been trying to check wrong Satyagrha But in this regard, I am going to conduct Satyagraha myself Mentally I have prepared myself for it I would be obliged if you yourselves resolve to remove these ugly posters, otherwise Satyagraha is inevitable "

After Vinoba left Indore, an indecent poster, with due notice to its owner, was removed and burnt The movement has since spread in different parts of the country

In Bihar Again

From Indore, Vinoba marched on towards Assam Passing through eastern Madhya Pradesh and south-eastern U P, he re-entered Bihar on Christmas Day 1960 He reminded the people

since he launched the Satyagraha movement in South Africa

What has transpired since Gandhiji's departure both within the country and without has shown that armed force or the way of violence can no more solve any problems on a permanent basis To think of reaping a harvest of peace and prosperity by sowing seeds of distrust and preparing for deadlier weapons is like expecting a silver ore from a tin mine Everybody knows the disastrous consequences of nuclear warfare and violence In fact, a combination of science and violence would only lead to sure destruction If man is to live, science must be wedded to non-violence

Role of Shanti-Sena

Through Shanti-Sena, Gandhiji wanted to Channelise the forces of justice and truth and non-violence and give them such a shape as to be able to match injustice and evil and violence, and also to build a new society—free from fear and coercion and exploitation Its was to be a dual role to work as a peace brigade at times of tension and conflict and as a revolutionary constructive unit at all other times Through it, again, he would like India to face external aggression or violence A non-violent state, said he, would be able to face the whole world

> "Indeed the weakest State can render itself immune from attack if it learns the art of non-violence But a small State, no matter how powerfully armed it is, cannot exist in the midst of a powerful combination of well-armed States It has to be absorbed by or be under the protection of one of the members of such a combination "

Change in Defence Policy

Day by day the truth of Gandhiji's message as also its practical utility are becoming manifest Even those adept in the art of war have begun to realise the need of non-violence In his book, *Defence in the Nuclear Age*, the well-known British Commander, Sir Stephens King-Hall, says

> "I have come round to the view that on the facts known to me and after endeavouring to assess the relative dangers of the risks inseparable from our present defence policy and those which seem to arise from the adoption of the alternative policy, I support the idea of changing the basis of our defence

strategy from one of violence to one of non-violence I therefore, advocate the implementation of this policy by a declaration (unilateral if need be, if other powers will not join with us) that the U K Government, as from a date to be announced, will abandon the use of nuclear energy for military purpose By adopting this new policy my country has a duty to take great risks in a supreme effort to save mankind from its impending doom "

Non-Violence or Non-Existence ?

Again, Dr Martin Luther King who led successful campaigns against racial segregation in America, holds the same view. He tells us

"Mahatma Gandhi has done more than any other person in history to reveal that social problems can be solved without resorting to primitive methods of violence . His spirit is a continued reminder to oppressed people that it is possible to resist evil and yet not resort to violence "

"The Gandhian influence in some way still speaks to the conscience of the world as nations grapple with international scale, to follow the Gandhian principle of non-violence, we may end up by destroying ourselves through the misuse of our own instruments The choice is no longer between violence and non-violence *It is now either non-violence or non-existence* "

Both wisdom and reality demand an honest adherence to the method of non-violence as an alternative, as Gandhi showed, to all wars and conflicts It is a departure from the beaten teack and new venture indeed But it is bound to prove very fruitful and its potentialities are immense

The First Unit

The response to Gandhiji's call for *Shanti-Sena* was not very enthusiastic And quite naturally so For, a country has to be free before its citizens can offer to die at their own will. But the threads in free India were rightly resumed by Vinoba When he set out on a tour of the trouble-ridden Telangana on 15th April 1951, he observed that he was going as a *Shanti-Sainik* in order to propagate the message of peace The epoch-making consequences of this *Yatra* are well-known. This *Yatra*, as we have seen,

has been instrumental in providing the key for a non-violence and lasting solution of our economic problems It was six years later when Vinoba was in Kerala that he gave the Shanti-Sena idea a concrete shape and formed, on 23rd August 1957, the first unit of *Shanti-Sena* with Sri K Kelappan, the distinguished leader of Kerala, at its head.

The First Rally

The first rally of Shanti-Sainiks was held on 2nd March 1959 More than eight hundred Shanti-Sainiks marched that morning with Vinoba They walked a distance of nine miles from Ajmer to Gagwana Addressing the Shanti-Sainiks in the noon, Vinoba said

> "The Shanti-Sena was started by Bapu (Gandhiji) himself who was its first general and also its first soldier In both capacities, he completed his work The idea itself is not, there have been saints in various countries who created Peace Armies, and one may read their history When I entered Telangana, I thought of myself as a Shanti-Sainik So far as I am concerned, the work of the Shanti-Sena began there Ever since then, I have been travelling as a Shanti-Sainik "

He added

> "This little army contains old men, women, and even the sick I hope that it will be effective in bringing relief to the suffering I hope and expect that this Shanti-Sena will be able to relieve misery both in India and throughout the world When Bhoodan and Gramdan had made a beginning, they helped people to clear their minds about the land problem, and as a result the path of advance became plain, we may expect the initiation of Shanti-Sena, in the same way, to open some other path of advance "

Power of Aggressive Love

But what shall be the weapon of these soldiers of peace ? Vinoba's answer is LOVE However, it is not that love which is offered in return of love This 'reciprocal love, is found even in animals There is no force in it On the other hand, 'aggressive love, or love towards those who hate us, generates power In Vinoba's words ·

"Men are puzzled as to how problems could be solved by

> love Power does not lie in 'reciprocal love,' but only in 'aggressive love' Reciprocal love creates no new power There is nothing out of the ordinary in returning love for love what is extraordinary is to return love for hate That may sound a very strange thing But that is where strength lies, and it is that discipline of love that we must discover "

It is India's mission to build up the power of love and show its efficacy in solving our problems Modern science also beckons in this direction In one of his post-prayer addresses in Kerala, Vinoba observed

> "If we can demonstrate this power of love in India, and use it to solve our own problems, it will be the salvation of the whole world Are not people every where longing to see love revealed in power ? Violence has no strength, it does not take sides, it helps all parties, for science has made a kind of mindless force available to everyone. Men are beginning to understand that their real problems cannot be solved by violence, and that the time has come to put love into practice But it is said that love has never yet been practised, in spite the Vedas and the Koran, in spite of the Lord Buddha and of Jesus Christ How then, men ask, can we expect practise it now ? Men failed to practise it hitherto, because their minds were not prepared, now, thanks to Science, the mental climate is favourable "

Vinoba announced the formation of All India Shanti-Sena Mandal on 24th September 1959 at Pathankote Speaking on that occasion, he remarked

> "I did not think that the actual task of organising the Shanti-Sena would devolve on me During any tour of Kerala, I realised that the time has come to do this It was not the particular circumstance in Kerala which prompted me to think so, but the general atmosphere in the whole of the country appeared to be explosive "

He continued

> "It is necessary, even for the healthy growth of those

processes of peaceful revolution in which we are already engaged, that we should make ourselves responsible for peace This does not mean that we dare to think that we can save the world, That power does not lie in us, but in the nature of non-violence It is our faith that non-violence can claim to save the world, that it does possess the strength to do it, and that is the goal towards which we must strive "

Surrender of Dacoits

The idea has since gathered momentum There are about two thousand Shanti-Sainiks (including women also) in the country They have done creditable work in Kerala, Tamil Nad, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and in Assam

What happened in the Chambal Valley (in Madhya Pradesh) when Vinoba visited it in May 1960 has won popular renown Nineteen leading dacoits, who carried prizes for their heads, surrendered before him and laid down their arms The urge which took Vinoba to Telangana also brought him to the Chambal Valley There he gave his message of fearlessness and compassion and truth

"We must make our hearts generous Miserliness produces thieves and dacoits I often say that a miser is the father of thief In Telangana, people donated 12,000 acres of land whereafter the problem (The Government was spending five crores a year) was solved The same is the problem here People take to evil ways Once they become generous this feature will disappear We must observe self-restraint Secondly we must be generous and charitable Thirdly we must be fearless Fearlessness does not come through arms but by virtue of the soul Thus, the important things for us all to do are—gift of love, observance of self-restraint and cultivation of fearlessness "

Further, he made it clear that no amount of coercion or violent force could wipe out the menace of the area Only peaceful methods and a friendly approach would serve the purpose

' Nobody is a dacoit by birth Nor is he a dacoit for life Yet it is said that dacoits have been killed Then where have these others come form ? The dacoits have been subdued,

> but not the dacoit-tendency It is, therefore, not possible to wipe out dacoits by the force of arms Violence only begets violence Violence, to be vanquished, must be met with non-violence "

It was this soothing Ganga of love, peace, and non-violence which flowed from place top lace Those who surrendred to Vinoba remained with him for a few days and were then sent on the night of 23rd May to the district Jail of Bhind Bidding them farewell, he gave one and the some message to them "Keep your mind on right lines and turn yourself to the devotion of God !" Next day he met them in the jail and offered his morning prayers in their company

Those who had surrendered were given no assurance Vinoba's firm injunction was—"Unconditional " In fact, confession and assurance do not go together Confession, to be real, must be unconditional They must be prepared to face every trial

> "The Law of the Government has its own bounds There is no question of going against it I shall try that justice should be meted to all of them They should provided with legal aid Their children would be looked after They would get justice But they must not think of amnesty or pardon If you get amnesty here you will be punished there at His "

Before leaving this area, Vinoba entrusted the sollow-up work of rehabilitation and reconstruction to an earnest group of tried workers who are Shanti-Sainiks all They set up a body of their own, known as *Chambal Valley Shanti Committee* Its office has been located in the town of Bhind The committee works under the guidance of the All India Sarva Seva Sangh and keeps in close touch with Vinoba

Thus have been laid the foundations for enacting a peaceful and non-violent revolution in this much-dreaded region The task is stupendous indeed The Shanti-Sainiks have to do or die It is hoped that power of on-violence and peace would emerge, happy results would follow and people's woe come to an end In the book of life of the Chambal Valley people, the chapter of conflict and bloodshed would come to a close, and a new era of peace and harmony would open

The Challenge

In Assam two, which was, in July 1960, the scene of unhappy disturbances, born of linguistic and political rivalries, members of Shanti-Sena did some quiet work They were able to infuse to some extent self-confidence in the suffering propulous and thus help the people come together

Both from the points of view of prosperity of the people and of the defence of the country, adoption of non-violence as a creed is an urgent necessity But it is the people who have to give the lead and the Governments shall inevitably follow The Shanti-Sena bids fair to defend India by non-violence as also to transform her social structure It looks like a dream no doubt But the dreams of today are the realities of tomorrow Meanwhile Shanti-Sena has to undergo much hardship and suffering before it may be able to deliver the goods The situation today throws it an open challenge Its members have to face the ordeal of their life

THE NEW DAWN

"Will you please give me your horoscope?" asked an astrologer

"Why ? What shall you do with it ?" Inquired Vinoba

"A look at that will enable me to know the effect of Venus, Mercury and Saturn, etc on you and thus I can foretell your future "

"First let me know whether your Venus, Mercury etc are active or inert ?"

"They are inert, of course "

"But I am active and alive Then tell me which can be more effective—an inert body or a living being ?"

Thoroughly non-plussed, the astrologer went away in despair

With a smile, Vinoba added "Don't worry about my future To me the present is more important "

* * * *

"The ulcer is giving you a lot of trouble It is necessary to consult some doctors," said an esteemed workers to Vinoba one day

"You need not mind it I can carry on well."

' Still, we may have the doctors' opinion '

He agreed and some doctors saw him " After mutual consultation, the Civil Surgeon turned to Vinoba and said

"We are all unanimous on one point "

What's that ?"

"That you should abandon this *Yatra* for three months and take to regular treatment "

Vinoba was quiet Then he uttered in a feeble voice :

"Please excuse me The wound is in the stomach and not on the leg "

Then he added

> "I am duty-bound to carry on my *Pada Yatra* till my pledge is fulfilled or I fall down "

So saying, he closed his eyes and went into a trance. For five minutes he sat straight and with closed eyes Opening them he said, "Do not think about my health It is like a tussle between God and myself You need not bother about it Let us do our duty "

*   *   *   *

While in Kashmir *Yatra*, Vinoba carried ten pounds luggage on his own shoulder Somebody asked him

"Why do you carry so much weight ?"

"In order to realise the plight of the labouring poor."

"The labourers are far stronger and more experienced too They can do it better "

"True But it is cruel to go bare-shouldered ourselves and burden them with the entire load "

"It is a matter of practice "

"No, it is inhuman Morever, I see in them the Toiling God "

With a pause he added

"And don't you see, carrying luggage on the shoulders enables me to gain weight !"

At this, all burst into laughter

Samya-Yogi Society

Modern in outlook, vigilant in action, and full of compassion,

Vinoba has been ceaselessly trying to identify himself with the poorest, and lowliest, and lost They cannot come into their own unless we have a social order free from exploitation and coercion This requires the society to be recast in such a manner as to enable the lowest feel as rich as the tallest Vinoba has given it the meaning name of *Samya-Yogi* society

Basing its philosophy on the four verses of the *Gita* (Chapter VI, Verses 29-32), he holds out three requisites for *Samya-Yogi* society as follows

1 No power should be dominant in society, there should only be a discipline of good thought,
2 All faculties of the individual to be dedicated to society which must provide the individual with opportunity for growth and development
3 The moral, social and economic value of all of callings performed honestly should be the same

Dilating upon it, Vinoba once remarked

"*Samya-Yoga* holds that therein dwells in every man the same spirit It, therefore, makes no distinction between man and man It even goes further and recognizes no ultimate difference in the spirit of man and other animals"

Samya-Yoga is not the anti-thesis of some creed or political theory It is not, like communism, born of reaction, against some established order, capitalism or fascism It is no queer protest against a particular *ism* or evil. It has a philosophy of its own combining the best in physical and spiritual sciences It treats life as an integrated whole and seeks to encompass all in its warm embrace and thus lead to equality and brotherhood Again, let it not be understood that it is another name for *laissez faire* Far from it It aims at discarding stagnant socio-economic values and establishing new ones—social ownership, equal treatment to mental and physical labour, economic equality, decentralised order and administration, and world citizenship And above all, its ultimate reliance is on conversion or persuasion and peaceful method

Third Force

To build up this order, it is necessary to create what Vinoba

calls, a third force This must not be confused with third bloc, keeping equidistant from both the U S A and the U S S R and adopting an attitude of constructive neutrality towards both It is easy to see that this third bloc is essentially made of the same elements that constitute the two forces it seeks to face The truth is that it also depends upon arms as much as others do and regards violence as the last world in the go of the day We unhappily like any other nation, are arming our country as much as we can and have our ultimate reliance on arms It is very doubtful, therefore, that the champions of the third bloc would be able to hold their own in the case of a global conflict Composed of poorer nations which do not resort to nuclear armament, not because they do not want it but because they cannot affort the same, it can command little attention Hence the need of generating a *Third Force*, markedly different from the known two, cannot be too much emphasised

Realising this urge of the times, Vinoba holds

> "We should create *Jan-Shakti* or self-reliant power of the people It should be distinguished from the other two forms of power—the power of violence and the power of the State The power of the people is the opposite of the power of violence and though there is no direct opposition between the power of the people and the power of the State, yet the two are qualitatively different our aim is not merely at doing acts of kindness, but at creating a Kingdom of Kindness. I therefore, want to devote myself to the creation of *Jan-Shakti*, the forging of sanctions of elightened public opinion "

Loka-Niti

Through this *Third Force*, Vinoba seeks to give a new orientation to politics, or to give it its real name, power-politics It needs no prophetic vision to state that politics today, specially in our country, is leading to dissensions, bitterness and distrust. It is loosing its touch with reality It is dividing people and making them narrow and self-centred It is not the politics which Gandhiji practised and taught all his life He was unequivocal on this point

> "Some friends have told me that truth and non-violence have no place in politics and worldly affairs. I do not agree,

> I have no use for them as a means of individual salvation Their introduction and application in everyday life has been my experiment all along
>
> "We have to make truth and non-violence, not matters for mere individual practice but for practice by groups and communities and nations That at any rate is my dream I shall live and die in trying to realize it My faits helps me to discover new truths everyday *Ahimsa* is the attribute of the soul, and therefore, to be practised by everybody in all the affairs of life "

Such was the politics Gandhiji taught us. But what followed after Swaraj and Gandhiji's departure warped our course and politics became associated with devotion to party and adoration of power. Unfortunately, in our parliamentary affairs we began to imitate western conventions and paid little heed to our own genius and circumstances The democracy so built up in India became a strange replica of the British model That party based elections or party-politics is not necessarily conductive to people's true welfare and democracy has been conspicuously established by what has happened in our country Divided by so many differences of caste, creed and language, it has further aggravated mutual bitterness and sectarian prejudices

Foreseeing its untoward consequences, Vinoba feels the urgent necessity of doing away with power politics or transforming it on Gandhiji's lines He has, therefore, made a plea of *Lok-Niti*, or politics of the people Putting this idea in a public meeting, he once said

> "So long as a country is not free, all strength must be concentrated towards securing political power But once the latter is attained every effort must be directed towards the achievement of social and economic revolution Hence, if you feel that strength lies merely in capturing political power, I must then say that you have missed the secret of Swaraj You should, therefore, understand that those who offer life for a non-violent revolution based on *Bhoodan Yajna*, do not at all renounce their object of achieving radical social change The Bhoodan movement seeks to wipe off the present party differences and establish, what I call, *Loka-Niti* or discover

the New dynamic of social action which is not a by-product of governmental policy "

This *Loka-Niti* is based on the *Third Force*, as pointed out above The formation of *Samya-Yogi* society through the implementation of *Loka-niti* by means of the agency of the *Third Force* or Shanti-Sena may sound ambitious But no, the Bhoodan-Gramdan movement has paved the way The fact that 43,52,866 acres of land (of which 8,33,466 acres have been distributed among about three lakhs of landless families) have been donated in Bhoodan and 4,752 villages have been offered in Gramdan is a veritable pointer

Bhoodan Movement

But it may be argued that the Bhoodan target remains unfulfilled and the problem of the landless continues True It must not be forgotten, however, that no political party in power or outside, has been instrumental in providing the desired land for the landless The Congress adopted the famous resolution on ceiling and co-operative farming at Nagpur in January 1959 But to what end ? It is gathered that the amount of land that would be available after the imposition of ceiling in all the States of the country would be about eight to nine lakhs of acres Undoubtedly that would not be of very good quality and also most of it would lead to litigation. Further, all of it would not go to the landless Those in touch with the various elements of our peasantry need not be told that there are strong, influential and resourceful interests which dominate the *panchayats* and make it very hard for them to render justice to the landless Also some State Governments propose to auction land obtained after ceiling, which is a sure guarantee of its denial to the really deserving.

It must, therefore, be admitted that neither the Government nor the political parties have been able to secure even as much land for the landless as the Bhoodan movement has done during the last ten years No doubt that it has so far failed in realising its targets, but even in its failure its success has surpassed that of all others.

This is, however, no consolation The movement stands committed to its resolve and Vinoba marches onward on his feet as steadfastly as ever. He knows neither rest nor defeat and is

nearer his goal day by day

But the Bhoodan movement is not to be judged in terms of mere donations of Gramdan and acres of land Rendering help to the poor and those in distress is but one of its three objectives The other two, no less important, are ·

(i) Rousing people's consciousness to a sense of justice and transforming the socio-economic structure,
(ii) Generating the power of peace and establishing the efficacy of the peaceful and non-violent method

Sarvodaya-Patra

It may well be asked whether the people are prepared to take a turn in the direction of the Sarvodaya idealism and work for the Sarvodaya Samaj One must be sure of the people's sanction behind it For that very purpose, Vinoba has, as it were, given the programme of *Sarvodaya-Patra* to the nation He expects every household to maintain a pot or vessel or container and wants the youngest member, boy or girl, to add a handful of grain to it every morning before meal or breakfast Its proceeds will be utilised for Shanti-Sena work A regular maintenance of the *Sarvodaya-Patra* will indicate the willingness of the people for a Sarvodaya order of society and their refusal to be a party to any armed combat or conflict

The *Sarvodaya-Patra* has not yet become universal in India. But the progress it has made in certain areas, specially in the Krishna and Guntur districts of Andhra and at some other places, shows its huge possibilities Gradually it is getting more popular

Way of Progress

Through the two-fold programme of Bhoodan-Gramdan and Shanti-Sena-*cum*-Sarvodaya-Patra, Vinoba proposes to give a new direction to our socio-economic frame-work and thus pave the way for a classles society It is not necessary to traverse all those stages which other nations had to pass A mere turn is enough In Vinoba's words

> "Historians tell us that society continuously progresses in a cyclic order In that course, some people are ahead, some in the middle and some behind So also in other paths But

the peculiarity of the cyclic path is that if somebody turns about his face, he gets the lead and the rest fall in the rear. To turn the direction is the simplest way to outstrip others "

To Tribal People

Referring to people living in the hilly and tribal regions, wrongly regarded as backward, he said

"These people readily agree to transfer land-ownership to the village as a whole Others who know Communism, Socialism and other *isms* are attracted more by money than by those *isms* They like the words Communism and Socialism provided their pockets are full But not so the *adivasis* or tribal people who work in community even these days They also sing and dance and perform their ceremonies in a community If the Sarvodaya thought is explained to them, if they are told that ownership of land and capital should be abolished and the village treated as one family, they can easily grasp this concept "

Need of Brahma-Vidya

Vinoba has great hope from these people His conviction is

"If rightly educated, they would be able to produce remarkable leaders and pioneers, even as a dry soil, lying waste for years, yields a plentiful crop when properly cultivated They are already full of life Right education or *Nai Talim*, not the current education which adds to the army of the unemployed, would generate *Vichar-Shakti* (Vital power) that would accomplish wonders Let *Brahma-Vidya* be taught to them so that they may recognise their inner power or soul force . The diversities met in our land would become our strength provided the unifying thread of *Atma-Gyan* (Self-knowledge) integrates them all And the two together would render society harmonious, noble and strong The Sarvodaya ideology proceeds to incorporate them both."

Christ's Message

Vinoba has been continuously stressing the role of *Brahma-Vidya* He is confident that, sooner rather than later, the world

would come to appreciate the contribution of Indian *Brahma-Vidya* to the evolution of human thought and behaviour On the Christmas Day, 1954, he dwelt at length on this aspect while paying his respectful homage to Jesus Christ

> "Jesus called upon us to love our neighbour But though this has been extolled as a great virtue by all nations, few have been found prepared in practice to accept it as their immediate obligation . We talk of love and non-violence and still devote the bulk of our resources to piling up armaments for mutual destruction. We despair of our neighbour This is cowardice Jesus refused to succumb to such faint-heartedness. He bore the Cross—the burden of our sins—and embraced martyrdom
>
> "Luckily the teaching of Jesus is not alien to India. We have been meeting the ground of a multitude of races, creeds and cultures, a land of synthesis and fusion Gurudev Tagore sang of this land as a great ocean of unity Tribes and races, creeds and cultures are fused and out of them emerges a synthesis worthy to receive the world's attention There has been in the life of our people an underlying unity which transcends nationalism and all other barriers between man and man"

Declaring that India, by her emphasis on non-killing and looking upon the least of God's creatures as one's self, had accepted Christ long ago, Vinoba made a fervent appeal for assimilation of *Brahma-Vidya* :

> "It is for our Christian brethren, now that their foreign trappings are shed, to subscribe to the indigenous Indian background suited to our genius And I also suggest that similar processes of wholesome assimilation may take place among the followers of Islam and other religions, Christians and Muslims of India who have hitherto held fast to their moorings and their traditions should no longer remain strangers to the Hindu cultural background They can easily assimilate the Indian *Brahma-Vidya* It would broaden their outlook and confer a wholesome spirit of quest and tolerance to their religious approach and add lustre to their culture Such a consummation, I submit, will render easier what each

one of us wants to progagate, and would make a worthy contribution to the growth of a common world culture Let us realise that we have come of age We no longer belong to the past, we hasten to the dawn of a new day for man "

The New Society

It is Vinoba's faith in the new dawn that inspires all of his activities On the basis of *Brahma-Vidya* shall be built the edifice of new society in which there will be no walls, physical or mental, between man and man and each will get equal opportunity to develop according to his or her genius Steadily and quietly, he is working for it and expects others to do so

The other day a Church dignitary saw him and asked

"What can I do for your movement, Vinobaji !"

' There is little for me to say anything new "

When he insisted, Vinoba observed ·

"All that I can say is we must preach less and practise more "

"Quite true !"

As the Bishop offered his hand to Vinoba to take leave, his eyes fell upon a ring in the former's finger He inquired

"What is this ring made of ?"

"Of gold."

"But the Lord used to say : 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God,' and His cross was simply of wood "

Nodding his head in assent, the Bishop bade adieu.

Vinoba thus calls upon us to re-discover ourselves and cleanse our heart of avarice, of acquisitiveness and fill it with a regal benevolence that those in power would envy With the instrument of 'aggressive love', he seeks to mend the split-personality of both the individual and society by blasting the barriers raised up by money and land-owership His is to set into being a new social process in which the awakened man and society will proceed towards the cherished goal through self-endeavour and mutual

reliance With a detached spirit and dedicated mind, he goes firmly on his feet with his characteristic humility .

> "People inquire whether the work I am doing would meet with success or not But it is not my work It is God's. Personally my mission would triumph only when truth, love and compassion overflow my heart I would consider myself successful if my heart were filled with so much compassion as to make my body break down and collapse "

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VINOBA'S GANDHISM : AN ASPECT

JITENDRANATH MOHANTY

Since Vinoba's *bhudan-yajna* movement captured the popular imagination as the most significant thing happening in post-Gandhi India, the question of the contrast between the two persons, Gandhi and Vinoba, and their ideologies has occupied many minds While most Gandhian workers, including Gandhi's closest associates, agree that Vinoba is only carrying out the work left undone by the Master and that Vinoba's ideal as well as methods are faithful to the Master's own, while, that is to say, there is the large body of authoritative opinion that the mantle of Gandhi has fallen on Vinoda's shoulders, there are not a few who doubt and question Is what Vinoba is doing in accord with the fundamental tenets of Gandhism ? Is it proper that constructive workers should give up their *khadi* and *nai talim* work, and that all *en bloc* should take to *bhudan* ? The present author, for his part, has been to convince himself that Vinoba is a true disciple of Gandhi, that the ideals of *bhudan*, *sampattidan* and *gramdan*, are consistent with the basic ideas of Gandhism, that the constructive programs of *khadi* and *nai talim* can prosper only on a soil prepared by *bhudan*, and that at a time when constructive workers were about to lose the revolutionary urge and were settling down, after Gandhi's passing away, into their own narrow grooves of action, devoid of fervour and fire, filled with resignation and despair, Vinoba has awakened them What St Paul was to Christ or, attempting a more recent comparison, what Vivekananda was to Sri Ramakrisna, Vinoba is to Gandhi.

We shall not attempt, in this paper, to vindicate this conviction On the other hand, searching for the contrast between the two personalities, one basic philosophical difference has come to light which this paper sets out to place on record, however tentatively

Vinoba believes in evolution Vinoba's evolutionary philosophy has given a new form to Gandhi's experience of truth and non-violence Gandhian thought exhibits two agents The basic principles of truth and non-violence were founded on the deeply felt experiences of the Master Gandhi never attempted a scientific philosophical orientation of these principles On the other hand, in its economic, social and educational aspects, Gandhian thought is based on brilliant scientific analyses The economics of *khadi*, the idea of a decentralised society and the philosophy of *nai talim* do not wait for a scientific founding, the Master himself has done that It is the basic moral principles of truth and non-violence that Vinoba seeks to establish on a scientific-philosophical footing

Both Gandhi and Vinoba believe that the law of existence is not a cruel struggle for survival, that man is not utterly egoistic by nature, that self-love is not the only motive working in human affairs The very fact that society and family as co-operative endeavours subsist proves that self-love is mihgled with self-sacrifice, egoism with altruism, struggle for survival with care for others This curious mixture of good and evil that man is has never, been lost sight of by Gandhi and Vinoba They are not pessimists who struggle with despair before overwhelming gloom, they are not opitimists who refuse to look squarely at the face of reality, unpalatable though it may be They are 'practical idealists'

The history of human society, Vinoba contends, is an interplay of the twin forces of self-love and self-sacrifice That there is a surplus of self-sacrifice over self-love is the reason why the human species has survived In fact, we may say that this surplus is the criterion of fitness for survival The species that lacked this surplus died out, those that could exhibit some degree of co-operation and self-sacrifice proved fit to survive Man's distinctive glory lies in his capacity for self-sacrifice. His progress lie in this direction, that is to say, in increasing this surplus of self-sacrifice over self-love In existing society, the principle of self-sacrifice has a limited play, Vinoba's purpose is to allow it a larger operational field Whether self-love can be totally eliminated from human affairs is a large theoretical question But any extension of the

sphere of self-sacrifice is a step in the right direction

Understanding human affairs from this point of view gives a scientific basis to the idea of non-violent revolution Non-violent revolution, which is based on love, does not bring into play a totally new force in human affairs Love or self-sacrifice, as opposed to self-love, is already one of the determining principles, without which human society would not have been possible What Gandhi and Vinoba aim at is to rescue this principle from the limited field open to it under the existing social framework and to allow it a gradually increasing sway

It is sheer dogma, Vinoba would say, to maintain that human nature is basically unchangeable, that the proportion of good and evil is once for ever settled, that what is possible at most is good patchwork but no inner and fundamental change On the other hand, for Vinoba, the history of mankind shows ample evidence for such inner change The revolutionary ideas that have gradually came to be accepted in all human affairs, economic, social, pedagogic, regarding marriage, family and property, all these point to a slow but certain change Vinoba is no revivalist, he is not one who mourns over all that is gone He recognises the humanism that underlies modern ideas of democracy and socialism The non-violent revolutionary is to take note of these trends in human affairs He is to realise that the winds are in his favour, that humanity is trying to achieve his ideals, that mankind can survive only if it decides to move according to his direction, that, ultimately, mankind must take the decision

To the idea of evolution, Vinoba adds the idea of inevitability Establishment of a non-violent society is not only desirable, but also inevitable Again, history shows the truth Primitive man took to disorganised individual violence, this did not work Disorganised violence was then brought under control by organised over-individual violence called the 'state', this worked well within limits Now that weapons capable of total destruction of mankind have been placed in human hands, organised violence threatens to exceed the limits within which it had proved tolerably efficacious Any attempt to put effective limits on this possibility of unlimited violence is futile What is needed is a total rejection of violence as a principle in human affairs The possibility of a total elimination of human existence that the weapons of violence hold out is, according to Vinoba, a demonstration of the inner absurdity

of the principle of violence through a dialectical movement as it were , primitive disorganised violence controlled by limited but organised violence, and this latter again exceeding limits that refuse to be effectively imposed But the total elimination of mankind is not feasible, for man's urge for self-preservation as well as for self-expression will lead him along the right path, and the catastrophe will be avoided With this analysis, Vinoba seeks to demonstrate that history is in favour of non-violent revolution, that the Gandhian and the *bhudan* workers are not fighting against, but are rather co-operating with, the *zeitgeist* for leading mankind ahead

No quality, Vinoba writes in his *Gita-pravacan*—and this is what has been called here his evolutionary outlook—has been manifested in its perfection. There is infinite scope for manifestation Truth cannot be apprehended in its entirety either by an individual or by an age. With the progress of history, ever new aspects of truth are being revealed This holds good also of such immutable moral principles as non-violence Perfect manifestation of the meaning and potentialities of non-violence is yet to come The ancient seers had attained to an intuitive grasp of the truth, but the endless possibilities hidden therein were not revealed to them instantaneously Ages of human experience and experiment were required to draw out those potentialities One cannot say that the same immutable truth is *only* being applied to ever new areas, application is not external to the apprehension of truth, but constantly enriches our understanding New application brings fresh understanding Our application, and also understanding, of non-violence are being enriched This line of progress will be continued into the future The future generations, more adept in self-sacrifice and non-violence, will consider our present attempts meagre The faults that escape our own notice will be clear to them They will improve upon us But, nevertheless, the fact remains that although the development at each stage is imperfect, yet it is an indispensable foundation of future progress And, besides, the experiences and realisations of each age are suited to the circumstances that prevailed and conditioned understanding

Realisation of this endless possibility of perfecting our understanding and experience, and looking at our present endeavours,

however noble, in the larger canvas of the march of humanity from an immeasurable past to an incalculable future, give us a sense of humility, and the satisfaction of being humble participants, like the squirrel in the *Ramayana*, in that great adventure

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THE BHOODAN MOVEMENT

PAT McMOHAN

In 1951, I left the University of Michigan discouraged and alarmed by world events As a student of social psychology, I was determined to find why India, the most poverty-stricken country, could find strength for a bloodless revolution, a detached foreign policy and an active self-improvement programme while most "have not" countries were still oppressed and involved in violent dissension

After arriving in India in order to find my education through practical experience, I have lived in institutions, worked with students building a village road, with a teacher and primary pupils constructing a mud school, and lastly and most important, travelled over 2,000 miles with Vinoba Bhave's land collection movement, going on foot through villages, jungles, cities, centres of ancient culture, living in temples, schools, and homes

From these efforts has come the knowledge of a more advanced way of life, the simplicity of the old village culture where people welcome strangers as they welcomes their children, the selfless idealism of the villager giving land to the poor, the loving attention of the family for its young Of course, unpleasant knowledge has come as well of purdah, bigoted people who consider work undignified, landlords treated as Gods, Indians turned against their countrymen adopting the values of the British

But once awhile some moving experience newly reminds me with a shock that there is a force stirring in this country that may jolt the world. A few days ago, a thin man in yellowed, once

white clothes, his skin and bones showing through the tears, bowed before Vinoba and presented all his land to be given to the poor When the poor can give to the poorer, leaving themselves nothing but their strength to do other work, what greater motivation and trust are necessary ?

In this age of wary scepticism, we find the new hope that in days of facing great social problems we shall stand about like men in a burning house, each unwilling to burn himself putting out the fire that is about to consume all In India one man assumed the responsibility of "putting out the fire" To solve the problems facing India—children unclothed, unfed, villagers digging little pits in dry river beds to find clean water, walking a mile to bring water from slimy green pools, men without land and without work, Vinoba Bhave has taken drastic steps which leave no doubt about his sincerity

He has left his home for ever to walk until land is distributed to the poor He will take land, wealth, or labour donations from the poor as well as the rich If he does not receive the first time, he or his workers will go again and again Every individual has a right to those things that are necessary to his survival Eating is a necessary as breathing and drinking, water, air and sunlight are free, why not land ? And how can the rich refuse, when the poor give ?

He accepts any workers, of any background or beliefs He asks them to consider themselves first as human beings Members of all India's parties have come to him, Hindus, Muslims, Chirstians, Buddhists Many have told him that these people are working in this movement to gain prestige His reply was, "Let them come There is no harm in prestige from good work Need I go and ask them ?"

It has been my luck to observe one of the most successful attempts in applied social psychology of the age Vinoba Bhave has not only managed to get dissenting parties to co-operate towards the same goal and settled innumerable disputes, but now that the movement has gained momentum, in less than three weeks he has gathered 3,70,000 acres of land Approximately 70,000 peasants, living near starvation, shall be able to grow their own food, wells are being dug, bullocks and labour have been given for land reclamation

As we tramp along the road, we are met by large arches of

mango leaves, handed garlands, defened by blasts of long pipe-stemmed hours, peacock tailed drums, conch shells, singing and shouting Between villages we meet people on their way to market, peasants in the field, pilgrims on their way to religious festivals. After a morning walk of 10 or 15 miles, we stop in a village, city or town, and local people give us our breakfast and a place to stay All during the day workers come and go, travelling from village to village, or house, bringing forms describing the land given Crowds of people stand in the windows, doors watching us as we work In the evening there are meetings of a few hundreds or a hundred thousand and the names of the donors or villages will be read

Leaving this movement will be jumping off a moving train. Every day brings a new idea, a new experience A movement that was once only one man's determination to undertake his nation's problems, though he might accomplish little and it should take until the day of his death, is now a movement of the nation, with workers in every province giving a year of their time to speed up his programme It has been a wonderful inspiration for me, and for those who are discontented and disillusioned with "magic" formulas, it stands a bright, new challenge

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KARMAYOGI VINOBA

P.D TANDON

Karmyogi Vinoba has captured the imagination of the country In the surrounding gloom, he is a ray of hope Peasantry looks to him as their saviour, land-lords willingly respond to his appeal The government approves of his Bhoomidan Yajna and give it some support The warring political parties sewear allegiance to him in his noble task and have deep respect for him. He wanders about from place to place and attracts huge crowds This kindred soul shames the selfish by his selflessness He does not want the people to give land to the poor in pity or in compassion, but believes that like air and water, land too, is a free gift of God for humanity and each son of His must get land for his need. He once said, "The land belongs to God, like air and water, and it is foolish to suppose it can belong for ever to one class of people alone Gain merit by giving land free."

Vinoba has conquered his self He is a life long Brahmachari He is sea-green incorruptible Nothing can lure him He leads the life of a Yogi and believes in complete effacement of one's ownself. He is a well-wisher of the rich and poor both. He is a true disciple of the Mahatma and is keeping the torch of non-violence burning, when the flames of violence seem to be over-whelming the world His Bhudan Yajna is a big experiment and a unique movement. It may not solve the land problem, but it has created an atmosphere in the country of which the government should take full advantage and help the poor Some time back Vinoba described this movement in these memorable words, "This Bhudan Yajna (land gift

mission) is an application of non-violence, an experiment in transformation of life itself I am only an experiment in the handle of Him, who is the Lord of all Ages, like even those who give and those who will receive the gifts It is the phenomenon inspired by God For how otherwise can people who fight even for a foot of land be inspired to give away hundreds of acres of land freely ?"

Very little is known about Vinoba's childhood He was the eldest son of his parents This scholar, yogi, philosopher, poet and writer, always led a life of purity and austerity His name was Vinayak and he left home at an early age He has inherited many qualities from his parents and grand-parents who were great worshippers and austerity-lovers They believed that all human beings were the children of God and there should be no distinction between man and man and their temples were open to every one. An unheard of thing in those days His grand-father, Shambhu Rao used to invite Muslim singers to sing divine songs before the deity He was a voracious reader of newspaper even in his childhood and had a good library at home He had dived deep into the oceans of religious literature at an early age and that had considerable influence on him He is the master of about eighteen languages Once his mother told him that she did not follow the Gita in Sanskrit and enquired if there was no translation of it in Marathi This prompted Vinoba to translate the Gita in Marathi He did so and the book was called Gitai and it has a high place in Marathi literature

Vinoba is Gandhiji's discovery He fully realised the great potentialists of his disciple and was tremendously impressed by him Gandhiji wrote the following to Vinoba several years ago "I do not know what adjectives I should use for you Your love and purity of character overwhelms me I am incapable of testing you" Vinoba is a monument of austerity and self determination He never accepted Gandhiji's views unless he was fully conviced of them Bapu often sought his opinions on various important matters He considered Vinoba an authority on non-violence He is deeply religious and is a profound scholar of the Gita, the Quoran, and the Bible He makes an abiding impression on religious people, be they Padris, or Pandits or Maulvis

Bharatau Kumarappa wrote, "Vinoba, one felt was the ripe fruit of the deep spirituality and religious experience of our country and, therefore, it was that all kinds of people with the most diverse

viewpoints gave him almost instinctive respect and hearing. It was an education to be with him from day to day and to know him at close range "

Vinoba owes much to his mother Rakhumai, who taught him many devotional songs and who created in him a longing for scriptures. She died in 1918 and Vinoba had joined Gandiji in her life time In his early years, he one day burnt all his certificates in an oven and said that he had no use for them His mother was startled at the performance, but did not say much about it. He had been living with Gandhiji and his parents had no knowledge of it as he had left his home when he was young When Bapu came to know of it, he did not approve of it and wrote the following letter to Vinoba's parents, "Your Vinoba is with me Your son has developed unusual brilliancy of character and saintliness for his age. I had to undergo several years' self discipline for achieving this " In this letter Gandhiji, it is said, used the word "Vinoba" for Vinayak and now the world knows him as Vinoba.

Vinoba is Gandhiji's moral heir His achievements at Telangana will adorn the pages of history. He has a mission to fulfil and let us hope God will give him the necessary strength for it His devotion to causes and integrity of purpose can be the envy of saints He is an effective speaker and hardly ever repeats himself His approach to problems is refreshing This matchless, devoted disciple of Gandhiji always lives on a high moral plane. This Yogi, with Gandhian loin-cloth and Tolstoyan beard is marching on from place to place in search of land for the landless May his mission be successful and the will of God be done

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THE TWO FACES OF INDIA : VINOBA AND GANDHIJI

BINOD U RAO

A thin Frail Wisp of a man weighing little more than one hundred pounds has scattered the seeds of a bloodless revolution over the vast tracts of India and they have taken root

Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Gandhiji's leading disciple, has created a movement toward social justice based entirely on the spiritual rejuvenation of the Indian people His new faith, rich in ethical content, has already led 3,000 landowners to give 34,000 acres of land to the poor In an India encrusted with centuries of feudal oppression and rigid class structure, his influence and philosophy have brought new hope to millions of ignorant, desperate people

What sort of man is this who can make brotherhood a reality for rich and poor alike, who has released a spiritual force in man which is the ultimate answer to tyranny and suffering ?

Born fifty-six years ago in a village in the province of Bombay, Vinoba as a youngster was seized with the desire to seek truth on the ancient, snowclad Himalayas But he found it closer than that. Hearing Gandhiji speak, he became fired with the Mahatma's philosophy and soon joined his famous *ashram* on the banks of the Sabarmati In 1921 he followed his master to Sevagram in India's Central Provinces, where he worked quietly and earnestly, helping Gandhiji bring self-sufficiency and self-reliance to the villages

In October 1940, this gentle, unassuming man was rudely thrust into national prominence and into the jaws of the British

Lion Gandhiji chose Vinoba to inaugurate the individual civil disobedience campaign against Britain's war effort in India, knowing that unlike his previous mass movements, individual passive-resistance required men who could stand fearless even when deprived of psychological support of the crowd Because of this honour, and in view of his subsequent courage (he was thrown into jail for his resistance), Vinoba's fame was assured

Vinoba's present attempt to bring social justice to India requires fully as much courage-in-solitude India's post-independence years have been characterized by a general cynicism in which Gandhiji's moral approach to reform—and especially economic reform—has been overshadowed Single-handedly, Vinoba is struggling to bring reform back to the spiritual basis on which Gandhiji had placed it To him, a great social-ethical regeneration is the only hope for India—and for the world.

The idea of voluntary land sacrifice lies at the heart of his programme In agricultural India land is all-important, and since Vinoba is passionately sure that social justice must be attained peacefully if it is to be attained at all, land must be acquired by the poor without force and without struggle

The idea came to Vinoba on one of his famous walking tours Vinoba initiated these tours in 1951 to spread his concept of village self-sufficiency and to preach the elimination of all class, party, group, and provincial distinctions It was during the first good-will march through Hyderabad State where criminals describing themselves as Communists had launched a reign of terror, that two miserable "untouchables" approached Vinoba and begged for a bit of land to cultivate Moved by their plea and by Vinoba's message of universal love, a local landlord offered 100 acres of his own land The idea of land sacrifice was born

It spread rapidly Before Vinoba finished this first march, 14,000 acres had been donated to the poor by large and small landowners Last September he started a walking tour of northern India, and by the end of November had received over 20,000 acres of land as gifts for distribution to the poor. The number of donors rose to 3,000

Vinoba appointed a committee of three of his followers to keep the movement in motion, to be aided by influential people in persuading landowners to part with their land. To regulate and facilitate the transfer of these gifts the government has made

special rules doing away with the usual stamp and registration fees and other red tape Vinoba's goal is to have every landless family of five persons or more receive a gift of one acre of irrigated land or five acres of dry land—a target of 50,000,000 acres, or one-fifth of India's total arable land.

But neither government aid, committees, nor influential people can possibly match the power of Vinoba himself in reaching his happy goal A mere five-root five in height, he resembles Gandhiji physically as well as spiritually His mode of life and habits follow the same pattern, while he wears, as did Gandhiji, a piece of cloth around his waist reaching to his knees to symbolize the poverty of India

But his personality does not hit broadside as the Mahatma's did It insinuates itself into the consciousness gradually, almost imperceptibly It isn't so much a personality as an influence, not so much a presence as a persuasive spirit His sensitive, scholarly face proclaims his shyness He reacts to cheering crowds with quiet unconcern, talking slowly without vehemence, selecting and measuring words purely for their precision and significance His speeches are lucid and compact and, above all, earnest—for he carries in his heart a great concept, a grand enthusiasm

Vinoba spends most of the time in each of the villages he visits meeting the people in their huts, seeing how they live, what they think and feel, and why. His evening prayer meetings are conducted in Gandhiji's manner, and the post-prayer sermon is in the nature of a heart-to-heart talk with the audience His habit of using similes from natural objects around him to explain his teachings is reminiscent of Christ's methods, and he has much of Chirst's gentleness and humility

Indians believe Vinoba has come lest they forget the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi—and his message A handful of bones, he is both symbol and signpost, a whirlwind on two thin legs which may yet clear the Indian sky However, native his brave formula may occasionally appear to western political thinkers, it still points up the riddle of the twentieth century whether a totalitarian society is to be established by gradual and inescapable pressure, or whether a rival, more convincing and more inspiring ideology can be developed and armed to beat back the totalitarian tide.

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MAN BEHIND A BLOODLESS REVOLUTION

M V. DESAI

Bhoodan is an all-party Programme for the purification of our public life and for strengthening the country. This is how Acharya Vinoba Bhave looks upon his three-year old mission for redistributing land among the landless

What is it that has made Vinoba, the scholar, thinker and recluse, a man of the masses ? Left to himself and but for the inner call to complete the Mahatma's work in the social and economic spheres, Vinoba would probably settle down as a teacher of Sanskrit and mathematics For these two remain his great loves although he has made a study of economics and politics and knows seventeen other languages besides Sanskrit Even today, this fondness for study and meditation persists. His public speeches have an occasional touch of an extra-mural lecture

Vinoba does not usually look at you when he is talking. But he is tremendously alert and attentive His arguments are clear as crystal He likes to make a point by raising his finger or a turn of the right hand His mind moves so fast that he anticipates and meets your objection even before you raise it.

A French quotation comes to him as readily as a couplet from *Tulsi Ramayana* He has much scriptural and saint literature besides the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* on the tip of his tongue It would be surprising if he did not have the self-confidence, pride and even the arrogance of a learned man and a self-made intellectual. Somebody once told his that Mars was influencing his life His reply was . "I am not interested in the influence a

planet may have Tell me, if you can, how I affect the movements of the planet !"

Vinoba has no use for that learning or literature which cannot be appreciated by the common people His speeches bear this out His Hindi is simple, chaste, and direct His message is "Land is a gift of God, like light or air No one can—or should—own it" He gives the example of land because everyone follows the logic What he preaches is the evil inherent in economic inequalities and social injustice If there are any differences in income or possessions, they must have a justification in nature

But there is nothing stale or repetitive in Vinoba's speeches, even if one hears him speak three times in the day for six successive days Only the essence of his teaching remains the same all else is fresh At Fatehpur in Patna district, he had what appeared to be a disheartening reception His audience too was small Young boys were conspicuous by their presence

He told them of the boys he had seen in the northern districts of Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga He asked them how many ears and noses each one of them would possibly have Have you seen any with two noses? Why not? If God gave one nose to everyone, could he have wished that one man should own a hundred acres while others were landless? Vinoba may lack eloquence. But his words go to the hearts of his audience and from him they take memorable lessons in politics, economics and religion An unbelieving mind may not take in his religious idiom and allusions with ease, but it never is in doubt about its impact on the people Indeed this seems to be the only language they understand

To those who suggest that Vinoba is trying to subvert the Constitution by preaching against private property which it guarantees, Vinoba has an answer According to him, the Constitution should not be a rigid, unalterable framework of laws It must grow and change as the people desire

Naturally, Vinoba wishes to make the country strong and see that it remains independent In his view, our independence cannot be preserved unless its content, which "has today reached only New Delhi and Patna," is taken to the villages By this he means that all planning for the village should be done by the villagers themselves Even if they make mistakes, this will develop their self-confidence and ability to think for themselves. When

they go wrong, the damage done will be confined to the village

Of all kinds of independence the one most prized by Vinoba is the independence of thought (He often asks if Germany under Hitler could be regarded as a free nation) While he would not dispense with state aid to education, he is keen that education should be locally organised and controlled, and that there should be no regimentation of human minds It should also be tuned to its geographical surroundings should not impart knowledge but the ability to make use of knowledge that there is in books and elsewhere

No wonder, therefore, if Vinoba is thoroughly dissatisfied with the present system of education He would have liked to see the first fruits of indendence in a changed educational system rather than in the substitution of the Tricolour for the Union Jack He thinks it is an amazing state of affairs that a Matriculation certificate, which indicates the possessor's inability to bear heat or work in the rain, should be required to enter an agricultural college

In Vinoba's scheme of things, power would be decentralized, villages would, therefore, be autonomous. They would be self-supporting and self-sufficient so far as the primary needs like food and clothing are concerned When he is asked if this self-sufficiency would not be at a low standard of living, Vinoba replies : "I would first aim at a basic equality in living standards. But these would not be stabilised at a low level There would be a general increase, of course, with more of milk and honey and less of tea and tobacco And the disparities in standards of different people would be small and reasonable—not more glaring than the differing lengths of the four fingers !"

This does not mean that Vinoba would like the urban centres to starve He would like town and country to be interdependent In the cities, people could manufacture articles of secondary importance like spectacles sewing machines, electric bulbs or watches There would be a rough demarcation of the spheres of work Cities would supplement the labour in villages instead of exploiting the villagers

Thus, Vinoba is no enemy of machines as such. He does not want modern society to retreat from the power and prosperity that are science's promise But he does think that science and violence go ill together. He would work for a non-violent order if only to

see that science makes further conquests and helps humanity

Has he then a message for the scientists ? He would wish they too, as every one else, accepted moral values and principles to guide their life "They should have the courage to come out and tell governments that they will not sell their intellect for destructive purposes."

Vinoba hopes that he will, "if that is God's wish," bring all this about by persuasion. He is a great believer in the power of ideas. To a Marxist who said that nothing could be achieved without coercion, he replied : "Did Marx threaten you with murder before you were converted to Marxism ? If Marx can influence people without chopping off their heads why cant't I ?"

While he places full faith in the ability of his ideas to change the people's heart, he does not deny the need for legislation Although legislation can sometimes lead public opinion, it usually sets the final seal upon something desired by all Without the necessary moral sanctions, it cannot be a uniform success Why do we have laws against theft, he asks, but none against the private accumulation of wealth ? Manu, the lawgiver, is opposed to both

In order to identify himself with the poorest of the poor, on whose behalf he moves from village to village asking for land and preaching the lesson of social justice and economic equality, Vinoba lives a simple, austere life He gave up fruit juice some time ago, since the poor could not buy oranges even in season

It is no strange or uncommon event in Indian history for a learned and saintly man to walk long distances over the land and take a living university or monastery to the villagers That was the traditional way of sharing the wisdom of books, meditation or experience

Yet it is a novel and moving experience to follow Vinoba on his trek through villages There are the decorated arches, the showering of flowers and the shouting of slogans There are the people who come to his meetings—the Muslim widow who insisted on giving away her hut, lands and cattle, the peasant who had travelled eleven miles to donate a half-acre field, the zamindar with the latest model of a swanky motor-car who said he would plough up the fallow gift lands and make them cultivable, and the landless who were the same everywhere and yet so different in

every village

The strongest impressions are those of the early mornings Vinoba moves out and walks briskly The sky is still dark The stars twinkle as if to say good-bye before they disappear Everybody in the party is moving fast to keep pace with Vinoba He has a lantern in his hand He leads like a kindly light amid the encircling gloom.

29

VINOBA : A PORTRAIT SKETCH

HALLAM TENNYSON

India, the land of pilgrims, has added a new variety to its antique and exotic assortment Vinoba Bhave, the leader and inspirer of the Land Gifts' Mission Any morning at 4 o'clock you can see him and his companions trudging from village to village under a twilight sky Behind lumbers a covered oxcart And it's not until you look inside this cart that you realise that Vinoba is leading a new kind of pilgrimage He himself is the very picture of a pre-historic Hindu sage He is bent and bearded and carries a staff He walks barefoot, swathed in coarse homespun But the cart contains articles not usually indulged in by Indian ascetics Among the bundles of bedding there are typewriters, stationary and a filing cabinet For the cart is the Mobile office of a Mission which, in two years, has collected no less than one million acres of land as free gifts for landless peasants If it reaches its target of 50 million, the Mission will have achieved the largest peaceful revolution in history

BIRTH OF THE MISSION

The Land Gift's Mission started in 1951 That spring there was a meeting of rural workers in Hyderabad in area where Communist agaitators were murdering their landlords Vinobaji never uses money, so he decided to walk to this meeting although it was some 300 miles away from where he lived On the way, in every village through which he passed, he came face to face with the misery of the landless peasants When he reached Hyderabad he went

straight to a village where Communist violence was daily expected and appealed to the landlords "If you had four sons and a fifth was born", he said, "you would certainly give him a share of your land Treat me as your fifth son and give me my share" Being Hindus the landlords' imaginations were touched Land was given, and the Land Gifts' Mission was born In his two months in Hyderabad Vinobaji received nearly 12,000 acres in trust for the landless The Communists there have never regained their hold

From Hyderabad Vinobaji was invited to Delhi to meet the Pundits of the Planning Commission It took him two months to walk the 600 miles, but on the way he received 18,000 acres From then on, the rest of India began to compete for his services And like Felix the Cat, Vinobaji just keeps on walking.

VINOBAJI'S SECRET

What is Vinobaji's secret ? When I first met him 6 years ago his name was known to very few He lived in seclusion in a village in Central India The day of my visit was a day of perishing heat, dust and monkeys Vinobaji, undeterred by any of them sat spinning on the verandah of his mud hut He talked of his experiments in self-sufficiency He had a quick nervous smile and blinked at me over the top of his battered steel-rimmed spectacles Then he returned to his spinning His thin, fail body and his grey beard, made him look much older than his 52 years—a modern St Simeon Stylites, reserved, recluse, austere I was told that he had once been a scholar and had given up everything to lead the life of an obscure peasant I was awe-struck but a little puzzled I did not see how such a life, restricted by its bottle-neck of high principles, could ever affect the work-a-day world

I ought to have known better India honours one thing above all,—Renuciation Renuciation of worldly possessions, that ideal finds its echo in every Hindu heart Even industrial tycoons are still apt suddenly to throw up everything and retire to die in a mud hut by the Ganges Vinobaji has reserved this process At the age of 57, when most people think of retirement, Vinobaji has emerged from it

It was Gandhiji who first demonstrated the powerful effect on his countrymen of renouncing wealth for the sake of human service rather than personal salvation Vinobaji has trodden the same path-way into India's heart. He has no possessions beyond a

spinning-wheel and a few home-spun clothes Hundreds of people have offered him their cars so that he could move more quickly from village to village They believe he would get more work done But Vinobaji courteously refused such offers The peasants can't afford cars and he knows better than to break the magic bond of sympathy that binds him to the peasants Again Vinobaji suffers from ill-health He has a chronic duodenal ulcer and is subject to dysentery And this has made him old and frail before his time Recently, when stricken with severe malaria, he refused to be treated with quinine since the peasants could not afford it Is it any wonder that seeing this elderly saint slowly but surely ruining his health in their service, these same peasants should hold him in veneration ?

RICH TOO ADORE HIM

But it is not only the poor who look on Vinobaji as a man of God He touches the conscience of the wealthy as well He approaches them in a spirit of loving conciliation They are lucky, he says, for it is more blessed to give than to receive And as the givers of land they are ennobled while the landless are merely the passive recipients of their rights Not that Vinobaji is unduly tender to the susceptibilities of the rich From a large landlord for instance he refuses anything less than 1/6th of his best property He would rather have no land at all than land given merely as a sop to public opinion The gift must spring from a change of heart And so, the landlords greet Vinobaji with garlands on his entry into a new village but they smile a little sheepishly at the prospect of being fleeced

To the Communist Vinobaji also speaks words of affection He says, "If you would give up class hatred and truly work for the good of all, I would be the first to join you" And despite official Communist denuciations of his work, in some areas leading party members have contributed land His approach is the same to all men, whatever their creed and condition An effort to reach the divine spark which he believes them to possess and make real to them the needs of their fellows in a language they can understand

HE KNOWS 16 LANGUAGES

This ideal he has put quite literally into practice Vinobaji has

taught himself no less than 16 languages At 46 he learned both Persian and Arabic so to be able to converse more freely with his Muslim neighbours

Vinobaji has acquired his strength through renunciation, much as India's ancient sages were supposed to acquire magical powers through their ausrerities Vinobaji's magic is singleness of purpose and an iron will There are many stories about his will-power. At the age of ten he is said to have sworn a vow of chastity from which he has never swerved At the age of twenty when he joined Gandhiji's rural centre he took his certificates and diplomas—and being a brilliant scholar and mathematician he had many—and burned them one by one in the flame of an oil lamp, in spite of his mother's horrified protests A few years later, at this same beloved mother's death he refused to attend her funeral, since the pyre would be lit by a Brahmin, and Vinobaji, although himself born an orthodox Brahmin, had come to dis-approve of the caste system When he joined Gandhiji, the Mahatmaji told him to simplify life, Vinobaji took his words to heart He vowed to wear no more than one garment at a time and to forego salt, the last remaining condiment which he allowed himself

But with all his asceticism, Vinobaji has resisted pride to poverty—that subtlest temptation of the saints He has never urged anyone else to follow his way of life. And he goes his own way with a striking serenity To someone who asked him if his work would succeed, he replied, "Fire merely burns. It does not care whether anyone puts a pot on it, fills it with water and puts rice in it to make a meal To burn is the limit of its duty "

THE SPARTAN WAY

Out on the mission of course fellow pilgrims have to share his spartan routine At 3-30 a m twelve dry and commanding hand-claps echo brusquely through the huts where the mission is sleeping—guest of a poor Muslim or Untouchable as often as of a wealthy landlord They pack up camp, then at 4 a m they assemble for prayers and silent spinning In half an hour they set off on foot for their next stopping-place When day breaks they halt for a roadside breakfast, vegetarian and spare like all their meals. A crowd gathers, and while he eats Vinobaji chats with the people and listens to their problems By 10 a m the party has reached the village where it will stay till next morning. Vinobaji

settles under a tree to spin and summons the local landlords

If they seem apathetic, he shakes a gentle skinny forefinger at them and reminds them of the horror and violence that will sweep the country unless the peasants get their rights In the evening a meeting takes place in a shed specially decorated with flowers and votive lamps It starts with prayers Then the landlords are invited to declare how much land they are ready to give Perhaps there is not enough offered to meet the needs of all the landless If so, Vinobaji asks the landless themselves to choose the most deserving, and at the same time encourage the landlords to make their donations bigger At one place an untouchable who owned only 13th of an acre offered his tiny plot, since he had just got a job in a nearby factory Vinobaji gravely took a gift-deed from him then endorsed it to the effect that since he belonged to the class to whomland should be given, his plot should be returned to him forthwith

Scenes like that arouse an atmosphere of almost evangelical fervour People start trying to outdo each other in generosity But Vinobaji is careful to canalise the flood of emotion He sits by as level-headed as ever, garlanded like an emaciated and reluctant Caesar Then he sets up a village committee to supervise the cultivation of the distributed land and to obtain seeds and implements from the Government officials From those receiving land he extracts a pledge that they will not resell for ten years By 8 o'clock p m. the meeting is usually over, and an hour later the pilgrims retire to sleep They have to be on the move again at 3-30 the next morning Vinobaji shuns publicity He will almost certainly tick me off for talking about him like this He himself has refused to be interviewed on the air He has said that if Gandhiji had not been assassinated he would never have dared to come out of the retirement Yet he is no mere imitator of Gandhiji In India where saints—and specially dead saints—exercise an enormous, even a paralysing influence on peoples' minds, one might have expected Vinobaji to disguise himself in the mantle which others claim to have fallen on his shoulders He does not He rarely speaks of Gandhiji in public. He has his own dignity, emphasis and methods Like a candle, lit at a neighbouring flame, he now burns with a steady and separate light

In consrast to most ascetics too Vinobaji believes in the future and in humankind. He once said, "People call this an age of sin

and degradation, yet how can that be ? The Buddha is supposed to have lived in a time freer from sin than our own Yet someone as great as he had to pay a heap of gold for nothing but a small parcel of land While I, a mere humble devotee of God, have been entrusted with thousands of acres as free gifts "

Vinobaji is the embodiment of India In spite of his wide culture and learning Westerners might find him less easy to approach than Gandhiji When first I met him I thought him reserved, almost remote When he spoke, his simple, unsophisticated language, suited to an audience of illiterate peasants, fell oddly on the jaded ears of Europe Yet most great spirits have shaped their message to conditions no less restricted My last glimpse of Vinobaji was the same as my first He was squatting outside his mud hut, bent like a scholar over his spindle A group of peasants crouched round him expecting guidance and help He was talking to them in his quiet courteous way And I thought, it will be the same tomorrow and the day after that until he dies And there was something about the image that this thought conjured up, something in the enormous tranquillity of his patience and his faith, which told me that Vinobaji's message was not limited to the country in which it was uttered The twentieth century may be rich in jet aeroplanes, but it is petty poor in saints We need to remember that what we call 'progress' is nothing if it leads to no corresponding inner change, and Vinobaji gives us this reminder in the one way which has power to move and impress By the example of a life and character utterly dedicated to the service of his fellows and the God he believes to be revealed in them

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INDIA'S WALKING MESSIAH

George Weller

At three o'clock every morning, in some dark village of India, the slumber of the poor is broken by a series of strange noises Twelve handclaps, dry and commanding, echo through the labyrinth of mud houses where men and animals sleep A little bell tinkles. Then twenty pairs of sandals move out, slipslapping among the houses A kerosene lantern winks by Presently, when the shuffling sandals are gone, there drift back the notes of a hymn of peace, sung in marching rhythm Vinoba Bhave, India's walking messiah, and his disciples have taken to the road again.

Vinoba is fifty-seven A duodenal ulcer is gnawing at his stomach, and dysentery plagues his daily journey of fifteen to twenty miles, Somewhere among the thousands of villages awaiting him is one where he will lie down for ever When he does, the Communist Party will be relived of its most formidable unarmed antogonist in Asia, perhaps in the world, for Vinoba has undertaken single-handed a programme of redistributing India's land Already Indian landowners have given him nearly 50,000 acres, often in single acres of fractions, though his only weapons are morel suasion and his own prestige as a Mahatma, a "great soul"

Vinoba does not badger the landowners, as the Communists do, before a mob of land-hungry peasants steered by a claque of party members When he arrives at a village he calls the landowners together quietly, under a tree or by a brook, and they are surprised and mollified at being invited to express their views to

him privately He listens closely, lying at full length like a withered Caesar, a brown skinny shoulder exposed, supporting himself on one elbow "We are sorry, but we cannot help you," the landowners mutter, between pious fear and indignant martyrdom "We simply cannot spare any land " "I have three sons and only twenty acres Do not expect me to cut off my son to help out some stranger " Experience has taught Vinoba how to handle this objection Patting the farmer on the shoulder, he says quietly "Consider me as your fourth son. Father, I am asking you for my own share, no more " The idea of having a mahatma in the family is almost irresistible, even to a hardboiled farmer. Then Vinoba speaks confidentially of his belief that rich and poor are brothers, quoting Sanskrit wisdom on the uses of property and proverbs on the virtue of giving

The quiet meeting with the landowners lasts usually an hour or so, and ends in a gentlemanly deadlock The landowners politely stall off a decission Nobody wants to break the common front by giving anything "All right," says Vinoba "So be it Tommorrow I shall be gone and you will keep your land. But I warn you , trouble is ahead " A long, painful silence follows, Vinoba lying on his back with his eyes closed, the owners trying to read each other's faces "We have so little now," mourns one Vinoba snaps upright "You have little, but others have less " His nurse brings him his collapsible spinning wheel in its case like a trombone, and sets it up begings spinning The owners shuffle away

But they are still not free of Vinoba Indians are proud Can a mahatma be permitted to walk on to the next village and avow the fact—which will reach there hours before him—that the rich here are both impious and mean ? There is another, more local danger In public meeting an hour hence, when Vinoba appears before the whole village, and just the same landowners, some little two-acre man, mesmerized by Vinoba or simply mischievous, may rise and give away a sixth of his puny holdings Then how will the great ones look ? Anyone who holds village office by virtue of landed eminence will seem indifferent to his local good name It is necessary to give Vinoba something—a token, say.

By the time the public meeting opens the landowners have put their heads together behind a tree and scrapped together a few acres Hoping Vinoba will stay at a safe distance, they send

him a message that they will "help him," without mentioning any figures Sometimes they resort to floral flattery to get him on the road sooner "Have I come for garlands ?" demands Vinoba "I have a garden if I want a bouquet Tell me how much land you will give " He walks nervously around in a circle of squatting farmers, with their wives and children He denounces nobody Does any small farmer want to set an example to the rich ? One or two hands are timidly elevated

The substantial landowners now see themselves outflanked. When they break down, their answer is usually the one I heard given to Vinoba in the United Provinces "We cannot actually spare you an inch of land. But because you are a mahatma, we cannot let you leave us empty-handed "

Yet Vinoba somehow leaves the farmers with a sense of having solved their own troubles, respectably and independently The rich, because they have given "voluntarily," are ennobled and dignified The poor have a divided gratitude—to the departed Vinoba, to the remaining rich, and to God, whom Vinoba summons to witness and sanctify the gift

Being a practical saint, Vinoba is not satisfied with the almighty registrar of deeds He also ties up giver and getter with a regular lawful deed, signed and humanly witnessed Knowing the poor man's temptation to make an easy rupee, Vinoba nails down the new owners with a clause forbidding transfer for ten years He has even squeezed the state into a little giving The farmers are exempt from the three per cent transfer tax And if the land has been waste and the farmer clears and plants it within two years, he pays no taxes

"When you awaken tomorrow I shall be gone But in reality I shall still be with you," he tells his villages He is, too He leaves helpers behind with the villagers, in joint committee, to see that the land is fairly handed out, with preference for the landless and the untouchables He keeps his rear guard alert "People know loopholes in any law better than the lawmakers themselves," he warns them Gandhi, who never was fooled by Vinoba's self-depreciation, once said "He has an army of disciples and workers who would rise to any sacrifice at his bidding." To lock the stitches after Vinoba has passed is no petty task, because on one pilgrimage in northern India he averaged 285 acres a day, and on another in Hyderabad he averaged 200 acres a day.

Vinoba's method has this drawback, it hits the man with middle-sized holdings but not the large absentee owner, Among 563 donors in Madhya Pradesh, 541 gave less than 25 acres and only thirteen over a hundred Vinoba has not worked out any sure way of getting at the remote rich The best he can do is to sour the lesser landowners against them, and thereby increase the tension on their local overseers Some day he may enter the cities, which he calls a "jungle of brutes," and hunt down the big owners

However, only the rich—and—obscure dare go underground in the cities when Vinoba approaches, the rich—and—prominent must line up humbly to be plundered by the apostle At Delhi, the President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad, entered shoeless the grass shack erected by the Government for Vinoba beside the memorial—altar—where Gandhi was cremated, and invited Vinoba to help himself to his estates in Bihar

"People want revolutionary programme," he tells India, "and think that a revolution cannot be wrought without bloodshed I cannot accept their contention They are not revolutionists at all They are *status-quo-ists* Their object is not a revolution, but to cause an exchange of places between the present happy and unhappy one A revulution must signify universal happiness without exception While the Western mind is trained to think in terms of the greatest good of the greatest number, the Indian mind from childhood is taught to think in terms of the good of all "

For the harassed Nehru the emergence of Vinoba has been a piece of sublime good luck He holds the Communists at bay while the Congress Party stumbles towards a formula in the confusion of a cloudy socialist leadership He comes along just in time to take over where Patel, the Tammany boss of India, left off. Patel, a heavy-lidded bullfrog who ran the Congress machine, was death on Communism He even rebuked Sheikh Abdullah, Nehru's friend and dictator of Kashmir, when that tell rebel took the Communist side in speeches about Korea. But Patel died, and the Congress Government was left without a figure tough enough and uncompromised enough internationally to meet the menace of armed uprising

Vinoba showed how the job could be done He did it without help from his own Government, a Government obsessed with forcing Communist China into the UN and giving Formosa to the

Communists Starting two years late, Vinoba saved Hyderabad, the Kansas of India, from being either seized by an army of Communist rebels of wrecked by anti-Communist posses of landlord-dominated state government But for Vinoba, Hyderabad today might be a Communist fortress in the middle of India

The Communist plan to capture India is unusual. Unlike other national Communist parties with borders adjacent to China and near Russia, the Indian Communists count little on a ready-made victory handed them by a foreign Communist army The Himalayas are too high, the passes too tight The Indian Army command apparently has not been penetrated by Communists riding on the Kashmir issues, as the Pakistan staff was before it was purged In India, the Communist plan is to organize farmers and landless labourers locally, and gradually to effect the dismemberment of the nation state by state. The crowbar is "the right of secession"—a privilege which has been guaranteed, with great propaganda foresight, in the constitution of the USSR, though of course never invoked there

This plan of winning India by amputation is a special strategy adapted to Indian conditions India does not have enough industrial workers to furnish the street-fighting militia of Communism Nor does she have Communist guerrillas left over from war, like those of China and South-east Asia, because her national army got first grip on the British guns and grenades But she was millions of farmers The Communist aim is to shape them through local bands of night raiders into that missing guerrilla force, creating a kind of Ku Klux Klan of Communism

The state selected for the first attempt at power was Hyderabad With a Moslem prince ruling a Hindu population, Hyderabad had been taken forcibly into the Indian Union by an invasion of the Indian Army "to preserve order" Its people were theoretically ready for a Communist call to break away again. Hyderabad also looked promising for a class war, because the rich landowners were squeezing the sharecroppers unmercifully The poor were sunk not only in hunger but drunkenness, rarely a Hindu vice

Hoping for a quick capture of the weakened state, the Communists shortened the opening phase of "peaceful" enrolment and jumped straight into a semi-underground offensive They distributed arms obtained in the melee of civil war with a simple

programme "Arrest the landlords Seize the Government" While the Indian Federal Army stayed aloof, the Hyderabad state constabulary become locked in a struggle with the Communist night raiders In one province, Telangana, the Communists won. They arrested the landlords, killed a few, and distributed their lands They set up their own police, schools, and tax collectors. They killed their "enemies" and sniped away at the state troopers

Then they intensified their sermons of secession around the whole clockface of India in Travancore in the south-west, among the Sikhs, of the north-west, among the Gurkha tea workers on the Tibetan border near Darjeeling, among the Naga hillmen of Assam, and the Dravidian peoples of eastern India In Assam they even succeeded in promoting a cheap diversion simultaneously with the main show in Hyderabad

When Vinoba decided last March to walk into Communist Hyderabad there was much guesswork as to whether he would be killed or converted The Communist favoured giving the lands of the rich to the poor So did Vinoba An alliance seemed in the making In Iran the Communist Tudeh Party had wrapped up the elderly Moslem high priest Ayatollah Kashani by the simple process of flattering him with the grand-old-man technique. Their Indian comrades might do the same with Vinoba After all, even Gandhi had declared himself a Communist, though one who adjured the party's "secret, violent, and deceitful methods"

Another tie between Vinoba and the Communists was that many of them were in jail as political criminals, and Vinoba had spent four years in jail himself Indeed, for many years jail has been the place to begin a career of leadership in India Old Congress rebels, now paunchy bureaucrats, used to hold parties to celebrate "the anniversary of my jail-going" Moreover, Vinoba was at the time disguested with wasteful governmental methods, and he knew that official attempts at land reform in Hyderabad had been bungled in such a way that many farmers had joined the Communists

But from the beginning Vinoba felt that India was bigger and deeper than any foreign doctrine He looked at the Communists coolly "Before the Moslem soldier came to India with his sword," he said, "the *fakir* came with his teaching" Capitalism and imperialism came from the West and their touch on India was

"both bitter and sweet" Similarly today, he felt, "The new thought currents like socialism and Communism have arrived from the West and they have come to stay Indian culture will lose nothing thereby The scum will be washed off and a new culture produced,"

Ever since Gandhi's murder, Vinoba admitted later, he had been watching the Communist efforts to take Hyderabad "I confess that the incendiary and murderous activities did not unnever me, because I know that the birth of a new culture has always been accompanied in the past by blood baths What is needed is not to get panicky, but to keep our heads cool and find a peaceful means of resolving by conflict The police are not expected to think out and institute reforms To clear a jungle of tigers their employment would be useful But here we have to deal with human beings, however, mistaken and misguided When a new idea is born, new repression cannot combat it"

Vinoba drew some of the martyrdom from the Communist prisoners by immediately visiting them in jail at Warangal They demanded that we work for their release Drawing on his own experience in jail, Vinoba said "The thing you must do is keep busy Ask the officials, as we used to ask the British, for work to keep yourself healthy" He visited his own former jail at Dhulia, where the Communists were execused from labour "Ask for more work for your hands," was his stern advice

Vinoba told the Communists that they had bungled their reform by terrorism "Do you think the ideas of the rich have been changed ?" he asked "Not at all They have simply deceived you" By violent change at gunpoint, Vinoba explained, the Communists had called down the brutal reaction by state troopers They had wrecked their own reforms

Then Vinoba began waking out into the villages to find out if there was another way than the Communist gun for getting land for the land-hungry The first job, he found, was not to wheedle land but to calm the frightened farmers Villages numbering hundreds of families had been terrified by a handful of armed night raiders At Puchapalli he found a populace of 3,000 totally controlled by a dozon armed Communists, who had killed twenty At Vavilapalli a young man but their dilemna before Vinoba "Communist guerrillia ask us for food If we refuse, they threaten us with death If we submit, the police threaten us with

punishment What shall we do ?"

> "Be fearless," replied Vinoba "If someone enters your home forcibly for food, there is no duty laid on you to comply with him "
>
> "Yes, but then they will kill us Are we supposed to invite death ?"
>
> "Death is an inevitability, and if God wills it today it cannot be postponed But if they have no sanction from above, the Communists, whatever their number and however deadly their weapons, are powerless to inflict harm You must give up the fear of death Those who fear death have ceased to live They are dead already Bare your chests when the enemy comes to us with a gun He is a brother and we must have pity on him Face him with complete equanimity and tell him he can kill and take away whatever he likes "

Nobody has tried this method of meeting Communists in Asia In the Western onlooker it arouses skepticism and ridicule, and a little even in the Indian But not so long ago there was a whole generation of people, including Westernized Indians, to whom Gandhi appeared preposterous Vinoba has developed methods different from Gandhi's against an enemy far more callous and indifferent to civil rights Essentially, however, he is Gandhi's moral heir

Gandhi used up all the moral oxygen in India and the British Raj suffocated Vinoba is using the same method on the Communists ' The force of arms is no mutch to the force of atma, the soul But the Communists have no faith in atma, they believe only in force of arms If they persist in their erroneous belief and in the violence it enjoins, they will meet their doom in India, for the people will cease to have any confidence in them "

In Hyderabad Vinoba pinned the guilt where it belonged. "Now that everyone has a right to vote," he said, "and the way is open to change the Government according to the will of the people, there is no necessity to resort to violent methods ' Ceaselessly he invited the guerrillas to leave hiding and try legal contest through the ballot. "I say to the Communists only that they should stop coming at night Take a lesson from me Be bold. Come by daylight " They answered him with pamphlets of derision.

In one Hyderabad village Vinoba told the farmers he had wrung nearly 100 acres out of the past eight villages "Today I am going to dispossess you, too, of some of your lands The Communists will speak slightingly of it and say 'How can it help if those who have 5,000 acres give away a hundred ?' I advise them to be patient An owner may give only a little Yet what he gives, he gives with love That is why I accept his gift I know that the rest too shall come to me "

"The Communists dub me a simpletan But I tell them that I know my trade Let there be created an atmosphere, in however small a measure, an atmosphere that this kind of giving is good for the community, for the rich as well as the poor Then I shall take the next step and move for the necessary laws " At first he asked the villagers to make co-operatives of their new land, but soon discarded the experiment, "Co-operative farming," he decided, "requires a knowledge of arithmetic of which the villagers are innocent, and therefore frightened "

Vinoba's tactics gradually evolved into something more realistic than telling the farmers to submit bravely He ended by relying on Gandhi's method with the British, countering fire-power with numbers "The night raiders are only a couple or so," he told the farmers "But you are thousands Form your own volunteer corps to guard your villages They must be trained to act efficiently If you discard fear, the Communists will stop fighting you Once they know the people are fearless, they will quit "

As Vinoba zig-zagged across Telangana, the night raiding bands began to break up The midnight raps at the door, the barnyard executions, tapered off The unjailed Communists began treating with the government through a front "progressive" party formed for the purpose They adopted Vinoba's advice of running fof election, naturally with no thanks to him. Many came down from the mountain arsenals Even Vinoba does not attribute this change to his influence alone, he recognizes that Lenin's Maxim, "Combine legal and illegal methods," is still axiomatic But Vinoba did halt the killing, mitigate the government repression, and bring the issue out into the fair arena of the ballot

"If the Communists here," Vinoba told a village, "give up their faith in force of arms, they would find even me joining hands

with them I would then declare that I too am a Communist. But their technique till now has been to create dissensions in every village and set them fighting against each other Mine is to unite and build them into an integrated community of love." Vinoba has not saved India from Communism yet, and he cannot save it alone But very slowly he is showing India that there really is another way out

All this was done by a scholar who had no previous experience in class war Gandhi had passed over both Patel and Nehru to choose him to lead civil resistance against the British But Vinoba had been long demobilized and was on the verge of being walled up in the Gandhian epoch Some people, indeed, thought he was already dead

Yet, by Indian standards, Vinoba had been pretty well prepared for his present work Rebellion and self-sacrifice are in his blood His grandfather had dared to bring untouchables into a Hindu temple When Vinoba was a boy of ten, he took a vow of celibacy, gave up sweets, and began going barefoot Though he later relapsed into wearing sandals against the burning surface of main highways, he still kicks them off as soon as he feels the country dust between his toes

When he was twenty, Vinoba's parents packed him off to Bombay to be examined for university studies, but he jumped from the train and took another for Bengal, the cradle of rebels He sent his parents a letter "I do not go to Bombay I go elsewhere But wherever I shall go and whatever I shall do, please rest assure that I will not do anything against good morality "

He went to Banaras, studied Sanskrit, and ate at a free kitchen for the poor In February 1916, he saw Gandhi for the first time and was invited to visit his community at Sabarmati When he came back to the university he gathered his philosophical theses and heaved them into the Ganges to mingle with the seaward-bound ashes of the cremated dead Joining Gandhi at Sabarmati, he spent hours spinning thread, grinding corn, and listening to the sage Gandhi wrote his parents "Your son has developed unusual brilliancy of character and saintliness for his age "

Gandhi sent the young man to study under a religious teacher named Narayan Shastri "Practise self-discipline and return to me in two years," Gandhi ordered Vinoba reduced his clothing

to a single garment He cut out salt He slept on the ground, Then he asked by mail for tests of his spiritual progress. Gandhi answered "Your love and purity of character overwhelm me I am incapable of testing you " When Vinoba at twenty-five placed himself again before Gandhi, the old leader adopted the young disciple as his son

At the time when Gandhi, being one generation ahead of Vinoba, was defying the British by his salt marches and other challenges, Vinoba was submerging himself in Hinduism, studying and preaching from the Bhagavad Gita, which is still his source As Gandhi remarked, Vinoba was "never in the limelight on any political platform "

Vinoba aimed to liberate himself from money even more fully than Gandhi Gandhi, to oil his various projects, had to accept cash contributions, but Vinoba kept himself outside the little Gandhitrusts In life Gandhi benefited much from the aid of the industrialist Birla, but after the leader's death Vinoba strongly advised against calling upon the angel Birla for money again He himself refuses cash gifts A merchant without land offered him 1,000 rupees Vinoba replied "Go, buy some land for me Or dig me a well Or buy me bullocks to give away," No collection is taken at his meetings All he and his dozen or so disciples accept for themselves is two meals and floor space in the school or village hall He wants farmers to pay debts and taxes in kind, not money Money annoys him by fluctuating He wants payments for labour to be made by hourly units

Vinoba's plans for India are the reverse of those of R K Patil, her chief planner Patil wants more bigness, more dams and power plants built with American aid Vinoba wants more smallness, more wells and village production He connot wait for the big dams, not with the Himalaya glaciers shrinking and the rivers falling He mistrusts foreign loans, such as Ambessador Chester Bowles is getting for India because they promote bigness

Vinoba is also against Nehru's pendulum policy of alternately taking pseudo-loans (actually gifts) from the United States—"begging," Vinoba calls it—and then demostrating "independence" by backing Chinese Communist imperialism He wants India to drop rationing and encourage the farmer by a face market price "If America and other countries give us grain,

will they do so out of love or out of a desire to tie us down to their convenience? Shall we go to America for alms? No, friends Let us worship Shrama Devata, the god of work, and ask him to give us food "

On the population problem Vinoba is an optimist While the Indian Government openly pleads with the people to cut down their breeding (the present net increase is 40,00,000 annually), Vinoba says, "I do not believe India is overpopulated In Japan the presssure of population on soil is four times greater The remedy is not birth control, but in uplifting the living conditions In Russia the prestige of parents rises with the number of children, The cry of less children is suicidal for the defence of your country "

Like Gandhi, Vinoba believes in putting India's idle rural hands to work at individual machines, especially the spinning wheel He and all his followers, even on the march, spin at least one hour daily But he does not hesitate to use a beaten-up truck to carry their bedrolls from one village to the next "We shall disintegrate the machine age, but only after we have drawn out all that is good in it" He believes India needs a great diffusion of small machines and a more decentralized system of production based on the village, not the city Planning must start with putting people to work, not machines

Assaulted everywhere by supplicating sharecroppers, Vinoba scolds as well as comforts them "If you don't help yourselves, God won't help you He can't shower food and clothing His mercy can be manifested only in the form of rains on the fields It is you who have to sow seed for food and cotton for cloth If you go on snoozing after sunrise, how can you enjoy fully the warmth of the rising sun?"

His gospel of self-help often upsets his hearers At a village in Madhya Pradesh, the villagers complained that deaths were increasing and asked him to wangle a hospital from the government Vinoba told them that diet, not disease, was their trouble "Give thanks to God that you have no hospital Eat sensibly Grow herbs and use them as medicine If you start a hospital, your money will be drained to foreign countries through buying medicine You'll lose your money and your health, too "

"I see the salvation of India" Vinoba says, "only through this double-edged weapon performance of bodily labour and

freedom from the lure of money In it I see the acme of Gandhi's philosophy, a synthesis with Communism and an antidote against both Communism and capitalism "

Open-minded as a teacher, Vinoba draws upon practical farming and prayer about equalty in formulating his doctrine Though met everywhere by passionate education, he remains free of both delusions of grandeur and pride of poverty. When All-India Radio, the government's nationwide hookup, pleads with him for a long sermon, he gives them only two or three minutes "The time is not yet ripe," he says He won't take short cuts by air, "because my work would be lost in the air, and none get done on the ground."

Meditating out loud about his givers, Vinoba inquires, "Have they gone mad ? What makes them part with their land which is so dear to them ? They have come to realize that revolution is imminent They don't want the Indian revolution to be one of a kind with Russia and China. They realize that mine is the only way to bring about non-violent revolution So they are voluntarily paring with their estates. Solve land, and you have solved all the problems of the world "

31

AN EXAMPLE TO MANKIND

JAMES H. NOYES

Vinoba, quietly talking to a group of Sarvodaya workers in the dawn light to Sewapuri aroused in me a desire common to so many foreigners in India, the urge to force unnatural simplification over complex problems by means of some figure easily befitting both tradition and the moment Such glibly formed stereotypes have done much to obscure real understanding abroad In a world accustomed to thinking of Asia in terms of land problems, peasant up-rising, and religion, Vinoba is a tempting symbol for those who would like to cut across all these forces and drive a neat formula. Another temptation, easier to avoid, is encountered by those who are so absorbed with technical problems relating to both land and politics that they would miss the sheer drama and the compelling excitement of Vinob's experiment.

As I watched Vinoba, I understood for the first time what a powerful force is employed when a moderate begins conducting a revolution, when an individual walks quietly among millions and is able to command by whispers Those who are afraid his revolution does not go far enough fail to see how radical Vinoba's emphasis on attitude really is. They assume that within the context of extreme problems extremist methods must prevail not realizing these techniques merely postpone the time when the serious work of dealing with individuals' attitudes toward social change may be take up Vinoba stands with those who believe stimulation of compassion in the minds of the masses is not only a more moral but a more effective incentive to social change than stimulation of indifference or hatred. If he is successful he will disappoint those

who have banked on the creation of hatred as a means to political power in India

At Sewapuri nothing was more arresting to me than the nature of the relationship between Vinoba and the government Clearly, fundamental differences of approach and ultimate aim separated them Arguments as to what constituted an economic holding or fragmentation underlay more fundamental disagreements regarding the old questions of cottage industries *v* mass production and long range power development *v* immediate improvement in existing facilities The government seemed to feel Bhoomidan merely scratched the surface and could, in some ways, serve to aggravate matters, whereas Vinoba seemed to feel that the agrarian problem was too vast for the government to handle, that their pre-occupation with technical matters distracted them from psychological realities For one unqualified to pass judgment on these questions the predominant impression created a Sewapuri was regarding the functioning of democratic process How fortunate for the govenment to have an individual like Vinoba communicating with villagers in a period when the absence of mass communications is a significant handicap to government planning How fortunate for Vinoba to have a government willing to give every assistance to initiative and remain sensitive to suggestions It being obvious that unknown consequences following action on the planning level are one of the significant pitfalls for governments attempting major reforms, Vinoba's stress on the only sure factor, namely, attitude toward the change, appears strikingly valid But Vinoba is far removed from the mere role of contemplative who is willing to substitute a change of heart for change in institutions, because he knows action must be simultaneous The state is responsible for developing social conditions which will enable the contemplative to render his teaching practical Bhave, therefore, appears in two roles the practical man who senses the necessity for concrete and immediate changes in the status of land holdings, and the equally practical contemplative who senses that these changes must be undertaken within the atmosphere of a particular attitude of mind if they are to be untimately successful

In these two roles, Vinoba seems to demonstrate a host of questions as well as some possible answers Is it possible, one may ask, that the great power which a single individual can exert over the minds of illiterate villagers constitutes a danger to a nation

32

A GENTLE REVOLUTIONARY

SHYAM SUNDER

There are indeed very few occasions when one sees some super-natural being managing the affairs of man and the origin of the Land Gifts Missions of Achary Vinoba Bhave bears ample testimony to this fact In the words of Acharya Bhave himself, during his tour of Telagana the idea originated thus ! "At one place at the request of local Harijans to get some land for them, I asked the village people to donate sufficient land for them The people acceded to my request and I received the first bhoodan that day This was on 18th April 1951 This is how the idea of Bhoomidan Yajna come to me. . . " It is an experiment in the voluntary re-distribution of land and Vinoba's success has to a measure been due to his ability to talk to the peasants in their own language. Here was a missionary than whom, they felt, there is no other sincere and zealous man who has come forward to help them solve the complex problem of their very survival The aim of his mission is to ask the owners of land to donate a part for re-distribution to others He had originally fixed a target of 500 lakh acres during a period of five years but subsequently it was revised at Sevapari this year to 25 lakh acres within the next two years which is about 1 per cent of the net area actually sown Donations have so far amounted to some 3½ lakh acres Though the achievement is very limited, it is the emphasis and the spirit of his mission that has won for him the admiration and respect of not only his countrymen but foreigners too,

In order to assess the importance of the Bhoodan Yajna it is essential to look back into the past A self-sufficient village granting employment to every man and woman was the basis of an Indian society until very recent times The village artisans produced a few things with the use of very simple machinery Demands were very few and spiritualism rather than materialism was the basis of economy Money was not in much use and barter was the rule With the invasion and subsequent conquest by the British the country was opened to the influence of the West which was rapidly being mechanised Cheap machine made goods and railways upset the fine balance of the village economy Old crafts disappeared and the new industries could not be set up at a speed which was fast enough to absorb the old artisan class or other surplus man power While rents remained fairly rigid through time, the productivity of land went on declining with the use of old tools and implements assisted by malnutrition of the land With the uneconomic nature of agriculture, the expenses of the agriculturists did not go down Old customs particularly those requiring comparatively large expenses on certain social occasions made the plight of the peasantry a very pitiable one Laws of succession and inheritances accentuated the position and the poor cultivator came to depend upon the mercy of the money lender for all practical purposes To add to all this, the population of India went on increasing at a very fast pace and now stands at 36 crores All this has hed two important direct results, there has been an increasing fragmentation of holdings and the class of the tenant

Percentage of Families with Different sizes of Land Holdings

(In acres)

Province	*Less than 2*	*2-5*	*5-10*	*10 and above*
Assam	38 9	27 4	21 1	12 6
(a) Bombay (Deccan)	19 8	16 7	18 8	44 7
West Bengal	34.7	28.7	20 0	16 6
Madhya Pradesh	49 0	—	21 0	30 0
Orissa	50 0	27 0	13 0	10 0
Madras	51 0	31.0	7 0	11 0
(a) Uttar Pradesh	55 8	25 4	12 8	6 0

(a) Percentage cultivators instead of Percentages of families

cultivators has also been swelling

The extent of fragmentations of holdings is shown in the table on the page 657

The ensuing Table shows that the percentage of families with small holdings is very high indeed and that a high percentage of holdings is uneconomic

As regards the number of agricultural labourers, it has increased from 75 lakhs in 1882 to 3 3 crores in 1931 According to the 1951 census, out of the total population of 36 crores of the Indian Union, 24 9 crores was agricultural The number of cultivating labourers and their dependents was 4 5 crores Besides this, there were another 3 1 crores of cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned and their dependents It has been estimated by competent observes that agriculture can spare about 30 per cent of the people employed in it without affecting the efficiency of production

These facts and figures show that the position of India on the agricultural plain is quite unsatisfactory Though efforts are now being made to industrialise the country at a much faster pace than hitherto, she is independent upon foreign countries for some of the essentials of life including good

Trained in the Gandhian way of thinking, this hero of the Individual Satyagraha Movement is pladged to put Mahatma's ideas into practice There are generally two ways to meet a situation described above Abolition of Zamindari with compensation has been suggested as one of the solutions It is estimated that Rs 450-500 crores will be required to abolish Zamindari in the whole of the country This figure is so staggeringly large that some people have been led to think of taking over Zamindaris without compensation Acharya Vinoba Bhave has shown a third way and this has fittingly been christened by him as the '*Bhumi-dan Yajna*' or Land-Gifts Mission His method consists of going from village to village, explaining the anxiously awaiting people the purpose of his mission and then making request for the gifts of land At every village, he introduces his mission in an original manner He makes it perfectly clear to the donor that land gift on his part does not imply benevolence, he considers his demand a rightful share on behalf of the poor He pleads with the owners of land to change with times and to see the writing on the wall After getting the land, one man goes round the village to find out the

landless ones and land is thereafter distributed to each one of them Those who were penilless before, became the owners of land overnight In Uttar Pradesh, in the early stages of his tour, he practised a novel method In conformity with Hindu traditions Vinoba at first distributed 'prasad' to the audience and thereafter asked for land gifts as though they were offerings to 'Arati'. But Arati of whom ? Of Daridranarayan Thus there is taking place a non-violent revolution which may well solve many of the ills from which Indian agriculture suffers

Some of the donated plots are as small as 05 acres and most of the donated lands have not exceeded an area of 10 acres. In such a case, an attempt is made to find a wealthy man who will take such plots, and, in exchange give a consolidated piece which may be distributed among the landless In case of those donated lands which are under cultivation the task of distribution is fairly easy The distribution of those lands which are cultivable but are not being-cultivated, is slightly delayed as the donated land has to be reclaimed In the early stage of Bhoodan Yajna, land was being re-distributed to political suffers also but subsequently at the suggestion of Shri Rajagopalachari it was stopped as it was not in keeping with the spirit of the Yajna Harijans will have a special position because in some cases they do not have the right of even owning the land. Acharya Bhave, therefore, decided to distribute to Harijans at least one-third of the land gifts received by him

The improvement that occurred in the situation in Telangana has to a great extent been due to the diligence of Acharya To fulfil the objects of the gift, Vinoba Bhave appointed a small committee in Hyderabad The method of distribution of land as prescribed by him is that ordinarily the basis of distribution shall be either on acre of wet land per family, or one acre of dry land per individual but it is within the competence of the committee to depart from this general rule, depending upon the exigencies of the situation The pattern set by Hyderabad serves as a model for the rest of the country to follow

In this connection it would be interesting to observe that there was some controversy between Acharya Bhave and the Planning Commission. To Vinoba no plan can be worth its name unless it provides sufficient food and employment to the peoples, they are indeed the basic functions of Government. He is not satisfied with

the Government's policy of continued food imports In order to maintain a high level of employment he advocates self-sufficient villages which would convert their raw produce into finished goods locally in the villages The members of the Planning Commission consider these ideas largely Utopian Self-sufficiency in food is by and large difficult to attain and in any case there is no sanctity about it There are big Industrialised countries of the West which import their food requirements without affecting them adversely except in times of war As regards industry, it does not find any place of pride in the plans of the Commission Though they appreciate the importance of proper location of industry, they do not believe in the efficacy of cottage and small scale industries to the extent that Acharya Vinoba does. Here there is a fundamental difference of approach, to Vinoba it is the moral aspect of working in cottage and healthy surroundings that matters most, to the Planning Commission large scale industries producing cheaper goods are more important It would be pertinent to record here that in Japan which competed so successfully with highly industrialised countries of the West, the basis of economy are the small and cottage industries Experts like Colin Clerk are of the opinion that the salvation of countries like India with large population lies in small and cottage industries rather than large units producing on a mass scale It has also been alleged that fragmentation of holdings will be accentuated by the Bhoodan Yajna According to Prof C N Vakil "On of the immediate needs of the country is to hasten the pace of land re-distribution Whatever be the merits of large scale ownership of wealth in a non-agricultural form of activity, so long as agriculture continues to be a way of life, rural opinion will never tolerate any piece of land reform which does not think in terms of redistribution of land and the spiliting of large-sized holdings " Acharya Bhave stresses the importance of co-operative measures Cultivators can combine and own the instruments of production jointly It is an underlying idea of the Yajna to facilitate the enactment of a legisiation to fix maximum individual holdings Acharya considers that it will be necessary to grant loans and other facilities for the development of lands re-distributed under the aegis of his mission He has started the Sampatti Dan to help purchase land for re-distribution Acharya has accepted gifts not from the rich but also from the poor, for after all there are others who have no land at all Besides, it is

the spirit of the gift which is of more significance He asks people to consider him as one of family where in case of partition, the property is divided among all It will be interesting to recall some anecdotes An aged woman who had neither seen Vinoba nor heard of him, gave away all her property, 61 acres and a house in which she lived In a letter she wrote that as she had no son, she accepted Vinoba as her son and signed the gift deed in his favour There is another instance of a blind man, Shri Ramcharan Chaudhri of Chandahpur (U P) He went to Vinoba at the dead of night when the latter was asleep He offered all the twelves bighas owned by him because it would be redistributed among the poor Among the rich donors may be mentioned the names of the Nizam who has given 3654 acres and the R S S leader of Jaunpur, Shri Yadavendraji who has gifted 2,000 acres

Though the odds have been heavy, the Bhoodan-Yajna has made an impressive progress The average in Telangala was 200 acres per day, from Wardha to Delhi it was 250, while from Delhi to Sitapur (U P) it was 315 The average per donor previously was 12 acres, now it stands at 16 These facts show definite progress but it has not come unto the expectations of Acharya The table blow gives the break up of targets for the next two years and achievements of Bhoodan Yajna upto July 1952 unless otherwise stated

(*In acres*)

	Target	*Donations*
Assam	25,000	
Andhra Pradesh	100,000	
Uttar Pradesh	500,000	304,370 (6-9-52)
Orissa	50,000	2,000
Gujerat	—	2,500
Tamilnad	100,000	—
Delhi	10,000	1,000
Punjab, Pepsu	100,000	—
Bihar	400,000	—
Bengal	100,000	—
Madhya Pradesh	100,000	7,363
Maharashtra	100,000	—

(*Contd*)

Madhya Bharat	100,000	2,000
Rajasthan	200,000	1,000
Vindhya Pradesh	40,000	1,000
Hyderabad	100,000	30,214 (upto 25-10-52)
Extra (incl Andhra, Tamilnad & Veral)		12,100
Total	20,25,000	3,63,547

It would appear from the above table that the gifts made in Uttar Pradesh and Hyderabad account for almost the whole of gifts made so far U P over two-thirds of the target has been achieved It is, therefore, necessary to accelerate the pace of Bhoodan Yajna in other states, if a great disappointment is to be avoided There are some states for which no targets have been laid down while the work of the Yajna has gone apace, while in case of others though the targets have been laid, the work of collecting gifts has not started yet The targets so far fixed total up to 20 lakhs acres as against the target of 25 lakh acres for the next two years

In view of these facts, Shri Shanker Rao Deo has also started collecting the land gifts and his collection exceeds 11,000 acres It was recently stated by Shri Jaya Prakash Narain, the Socialist leader, that he would also devote his time to the Bhoodan Yajna In a recent circular to Pradesh Committees, the A I C C Office recently asked congressmen to co-operate in a fuller manner with Acharya Bhave's movement It was suggested that State Government should pass necessary enactment to legalise the transfers of land This has already been done in Hyderabad and necessary steps in this connection have already been taken in Uttar Pradesh

The Bhoomidan Yajna thus conceived is likely to prove a great instrument of social amelioration But in order to make agriculture a business proposition along with a way of life not only should the land be re-distributed but also the agricultural productivity raised Peasants should be provided with suitable employments in their leisure hours It is true that voluntary efforts cannot do much but in so far as they not only show the way but also do things with the concurrence and goodwill of the parties concerned, they achieved much more than the coersive measures of the state This indeed is the basis if Booodan Yajna The underlying idea

of the mission is that " . . every son of the soil, i e , every man must have a right and a claim on Mother Earth, in the same way as he has over air and water" It is not so much the solution of the problem as the method of its working out that maters more, non-violence thus understood is the test for a man like Acharya Vinoba Bhave who has devoted the whole of his life in the service of his country That is the real way of Sarvodaya

33

A POWERFUL SOUL

BIRENDRANATH GUHA

"A powerful soul lives in a weak body   As the soul advances in strength, the body languishes," Gandhi wrote, in *Navajivan*, June 5, 1924 If it is acceptance, Vinayak Narhari Bhave may very well possess a powerful soul   And he does   Vinoba stands five foot six and weighs just seven stones   He works hard   He walks a lot, not less than twelve to thirteen miles in the average   His day begins at 3 A M and usually ends at 9 P M   He and his associates pray as they work, or, now, as they walk

As the writer first saw him he had the feeling that had not there been a Gandhi to draw him to the service of man as service of God he might well have been one of the very highest order of recluses of whom India has ever had a succession. But very soon he came to revise his estimate For, like all the great souls of India who had something new to give, Vinoba also has a commentary of his own on the *Gita*   And it emphasizes immaculate service as the road to unity with the Maker   Vinoba has a complete philosophy of life   And that philosophy, if not the whole, quite a large slice of it must be akin to Gandhi's   For ascribing to Gandhi all that he is doing, and the great change that has come in his manners, he says, "It is Bapu's bleesings that have wrought this mircle I believe, the work I am doing would please his soul wherever it might be "   And again, "This day, I feel the presence of Bapu, as I feel the presence of God "

Who will now say which of the two estimates is the correct one ! Vinoba only can.

"Makest me thy slave, effacest my ego, erasest my name," so prays Vinoba just as the master did, "I want to be his willing slave" Vinoba wants to reduce himself to a zero

The dumb millions are his masters as they were to Gandhi Gandhi would not go to the Himalayas to see God So too, Vinoba would not go to sacred places to seek his God " . But for me the place where you all live is the sacred place To me your bodies are not just compounds of the five elements I look upon you as my God Long journeys tire out this frail body But when I get an opportunity to serve you my fatigue vanishes "

Yet Vinoba is not an echo It is fortunate he is not. For it is not an echo to walk a new way, to give a thing a new shape such as the times demand, to fulfil a historical necessity Vinoba has to fulfil a historical necessity Vinoba is original Vinoba is a revolutionary Gandhi gone, India needed such a one as he India has half the Swaraj The other half remains to be constructed If it is to be as it was envisaged by Gandhi and as alone can lead to the true emancipation of the masses, it needs a revolutionary Vinoba's *Bhoo-dan Yajna* is the first step to the realization of that economic independence—the *Sarvodaya*

One's work is one's life Vinoba's work is just now before the public And it is an ample page Yet men look backward, as they look forward to size up a thing It is in them

Born in 1894, Vinoba will complete his fifty-seventh year on September 11 He was the eldest of five children, four sons and a daughter born to Narahari Bhave and Rukmini Devi The Bhaves of Gagoda, Tahsil Pen, District Kolaba in Maharashtra were fairly well-to-do Chitpavan Brahmans The youngest of the four brothers died young Bal-krishan Vikoji Bhave the second brother is in charge of the Nature Cure Centre, started by Gandhi at Uruli-Kanchan The third brother Shivaji, a great Sanskrit scholar, lives at Dhulia unattached to any Ashram or institution He takes orders from the eldest brother and is engaged in language reform work Under instructions of Vinoba he has given shape to *Loka Nagari lipi* which avoids use of compounds

Rukmini must have been a wise lady, a sensible mother Vinoba got a lot from her He often fondly refers to her in his writings In the obituary notice in *Sarvodaya* of Raman Maharshi the following occurs "One day while reading *Bhakta-Vijaya* I remarked, 'Mother, such saints were there only in ancient times '

'Mother said,' Vinoba continues, 'they are there even today Only we do not know them Without such as these the world cannot go" Gita-pravachana contains many a like reference to his mother Vinoba writes ·

> "Like so many, I also once said to mother, 'Here is a beggar strong and plump, come to beg To give alms to such a one is to encourage indolence and lassitude." And I cited in support the *Deshe kale cha patra cha* sloka from the Gita Mother said, "The beggar that is come is God Himself. Now distinguish the deserving from the undeserving Would you rate God as undeserving ? Who are you and who am I to distinguish one from the other I do not see there is much to consider For me he is God'" And then Vinoba observes, "I have not to this day found a fitting reply to what mother said in meeting my objection"

Instances such as these could be multiplied But that is unnecessary She died rather young in 1918, a victim to the influenza scourge

In childhood Vinoba was most unruly He had possibly in him an extra dose of surplus energy that led him to monkeyish tricks which often invited a fastidious father's birch But morally Vinayak was all right, all high

Father Narahari secured a diploma in dying from the Marharaja Gaekwad's Kala Bhavan He belonged to the first batch of students He served for some time in the department of the Buckingham Mills British India dying khaki was a contribution of Kala Bhavan In order to give his children proper education Nahari left the Buckingham Mills job and shifted to Baroda as a head-clerk in State Government service Narhari was a man of modern outlook and had a bias for industrial education

Up to sixth standard Vinayak always stood first He then lost interest in routine studies, and passed his examinations somehow Nevertheless his store of knowledge kept increasing in volume. He was selective in his studies, things enduring appealing rather than things transient A great Sanskrit scholar, he has not read *Sakuntala* Mathematics and philosophy were his favourite subjects Of mathematics only recently (*Sarvodaya*, March 1952) he wrote, "Next to God if I love anything best it is mathematics" And

mathematical precision marks all his actions as *anasakta* actions enjoined by the Gita should be A marvellous memory aided by selective studies laid the foundation of his profound scholarship Vinoba had French for his second language His father had a mind to send him to Europe

In those days there was no spiritual or ascetic trend in him Politics drew him And politics then meant getting rid of the British It was partition days then Chiplunker and Tilak were his heroes Young Vinayak and friends started a Vidyarthi Mandal which might any day become a bomb-throwers' association

Vinoba was to appear in I A examination in 1916 Ostensibly he left for Bombay for the purpose, but went to Calcutta and thence to Banaras, where he saw Gandhi first He joined Mahatma's Ashram

Gandhi wrote about him thus

> ". He is a Sanskrit scholar He joined the Asharm almost at its inception He was among the first members In order to better qualify himself he took one year's leave to prosecute further studies in Sanskrit And practically at the same hour at which he had left the Ashram a year before he walked into it without notice I had forgotten that he was to arrive that day. He has taken part in every menial activity of the Ashram from scavenging to cooking Though he has a marvellous memory and is a student by nature, he has devoted the largest part of his time to spinning in which has specialized as very few have Being a born teacher he has been of the utmost assistance to Asha Devi in her development of the scheme of education through handicrafts
>
> " He is responsible for producing a young man who has dedicated himself to the service of lepers "

The above, Gandhi wrote introducing Vinoba to the public as the first individual Satyagrahi

"In 1917, when Mr Andrews was at the Ashram," wrote Mahadev Desai in Harijan, October 20, 1940, "I remember Gandhiji describing to him Vinoba in these terms 'He is one of the few pearls in the Ashram They do not come, like others, to be blessed by the Ashram, but to bless it, not to receive, but to give."

Did he not get anything in return from the Ashram ? Let Mahadev say In *Young India* of 1923 he wrote

> " Though Gandhiji said that he had gone to the Ashram to give and not to receive, this is what Vinoba has said in a talk 'Only I can know what I have got in the Ashram It was an early ambition of mine to distinguish myself by a violent deed in the service of the country But Bapu cured me of that ambition It is he who extinguished the volcano of anger and other passions in me I have been progressing every day of my life in the Ashram Every year I have been making one of the *Mahabratas* my own' "

Vinoba was not keeping well in the Ashram He got one year's leave He went to Wai, a health resort in Satara District Wai is a sacred place, a beauty-spot on the Krishna river, and at the foot of the Mahabaleshwar hills There the Bhaves of Gagoda have a temple dedicated to Shankara At the time Narayan Shastri Marhatta, a great Sanskrit Scholar, had his Prajna Pathshala there During his stay at Wai, Vinoba took lessons from the Shastri not as a regular but a casual student

Marathi is his mother language Besides Sanskrit and Pali, Vinoba knows English, French, Urdu, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu and possibly Kanarese and Oriya At Sevapuri he opened his talk with Sarvodaya Sevaks from Bengal with Bengali sentence "I do follow Bengali, but can't speak it " He is learning Bengali He learns the languages of the people of India, because he wants to appeal straight to their heart, which you never can, unless you do speak to them in their own And this also induced him to learn Arabic, the language of the Koran, the sacred book of Muslims, our neighbours And he has a peculiar language sense He will detect in your speech flaws of language, even it be that his acquaintance with your language is of the slightest. His language is simple and direct The words he chooses are appropriate and are such as any one would understand There is no verbiage in him He has a rare economy in the use of words The following except from him will give an idea of the literary skill he prizes

> "Choose every word carefully For, if the words you choose are not appropriate, your expression instead of being substantial may be just airy Some words carry inadequate

> sense, some more than the adequate, and some again have contrary connotations One must avoid all these three defects and express a thing exactly as it takes shape in the mind "

Gandhi initiated the people into truth and non-violence, and through them (Satyagraha) gave India political freedom It has been left to Vinoba to initiate the people into *aparigraha* (non-possession) and *asteya* (non-stealing) and through them (Sarvodaya) to construct the other half of India's freedom—economic independence

> "Shri Vinoba saw that the root of the malady of the present world lay in its faith in money It was, therefore, necessary to depose Money, the symbol of possession (and of power, if we are permitted to add) from its sovereignty over life After deep reflection accompanied with fast, Shri Vinoba made a resolve not to accept money gifts And there never was with him a question of earning money

Labour and money are the two forces in the world In order to escape from labour one has to lay by money As long as money occupies the place of pride, labour cannot attain dignity, however, much it may improve in its quality and volume Vinoba has deposed money and raised the dignity of labour Only after bringing about this transformation in his own psrson has Vinoba earned for himself the right to preach non-possession, i e, curtailing one's possessions of wealth And owners of land have supplied the proof that the Indian nation has not forgotten its ancient tradition of being influence by the higher law—the law of spirit "

—Kaka Kalelker

At Paramdham Pavnar, Vinoba's Ashram, they produce by body-labour primary necessities of life They forgo for the time being the use of any such item they need but have not produced They do not go to market for it Vinoba defines this effort to depose money, the realization of this ideal as *Samya-yoga.* And his *Bhoo-dan yajna* is an extension of this ideal to society, for without returning lands to the tillers of the soil, there is no doing away with the sway of wealth Vinoba attributes his achievements in Telangana and Uttar Pradesh to this experiment of his at Paramdham Pavnar. He says also

"But for that experiment, I might not have the confidence

which marked all my actions, but for that I might not have shed my timidity and my shyness might have persisted Then too, the labour I put on good earth acknowledging the cultivator as my *guru*, has given me a humility I never have had "

Vinoba was not what he is today According to Tukoji Maharaj, the celebrated Bhajan-singer from Maharashtra, Vinoba was not accessible He says

"God is for the good of all What was Bapu if he was not God ? Today revered Vinoba has become god Vinoba was not what he is today His was a secluded life He did not meet any one, nor did he talk to anybody Had Bapu been with us today you would not have found Vinoba going from village to village He talked at you, never talked to you He has now come to realize that seclusion, cold reserve does not pay He now addresses people as brother, as cousin To some he says he is his brother, to some other he says he is his son Who will say this Vinoba is that Vinoba ? Father gone, the son has now to shoulder the burden Now Vinoba to us is what Bapu was to us then After Gandhi's death he has became as loving as he "

With all this humility—he ends his speeches and letters with *Vinoba ke pranam* (Vinoba's salutation)—a little ruggedness seems still to persist in him, which time and his daily increasing contact with people will round off Or it may be, he retains something of the old reserve that is mistaken by casual visitors as ruggedness The character of that reserve is revealed from the following written by Mahadev Desai in *Young India* of 1917

"You may stay days and days with him without knowing him and even when you know him you only begin to know him. You meet with a reserve which you cannot easily break He does not talk much, rarely does he say anything about himself And yet if you could get at the bottom of his profound depths you are sure to exclaim, "Nowhere have I struck such treasures "

The Gita has been and is his guide He turns to it at every corner for direction and he gets it The Gita sastains him, gives him energy, gives him drive In his own words

"I have no words to explain the place the Gita occupies

> in my life It has done me infinite good " And again, "In all my actions the Gita has been my guide, as it is today It has always given me peace of mind, energy and wisdom Whenever I needed an incentive or the drive to do a thing, it came from the Gita "

And what, according to Vinoba, the Gita teaches it that can at all be given in so few words ? To him the Gita does not emphasize action alone, or devotion alone, or realization alone Neither would he accept the opposite view which regards it as an amalgam of the three A little of all the three has also no appeal for him That it is a gradual progress from action to devotion and from devotion to realization is neither acceptable to him Nor does he like the view that seeks to reconcile the three "I would rather say," he writes in his commentary, "what is action is devotion and what is devotion is realization "

Vinoba's *Gitai* is a good seller Of it Mahadevbhai wrote "He has produced a Marathi translation of the Gita in parallel verse which reproduces the haunting music of the original in an amazing degree and hundred thousand copies of it have been sold in Maharashtra " His *Gita-pravachan* in Hindi, translation from the original in Marathi, has gone through five editions, number of copies running to sixty-six thousand

Now a brief reference to his work that is just now before the public and that has given him publicity

Establishment of equality, to bring about Sarvodaya (the greatest good of *all*, and not the greatest good of the greatest number) is the object of *Bhoodan yajna* which Vinoba has called his five-year plan Vinoba says

> "Now that political freedom has been attained, we have to work for the establishment of equality I have called that Sarvodaya. You may, if you like, call that Samyayoga or Sarvodaya It is for the establishment of this Sarvodaya that I have been going from village to village
>
> "I call this my five-year plan If all of you take up this work for the next five years and during that time succeed in transferring five crore acres of land, then a great non-violent revolution has taken place in India "

It is a historical necessity

"What I am doing is not against the trend of history

You have to recognize that what has not happened before may happen Russian revolution had had no precedent, yet it came So too this may come about Whatever that may be, what I am doing is not against history, but is a historical necessity "

Vinoba does not beg, he initiates

"I demand land," Vinoba says, "as of right on behalf of the poor I do not beg it of you I say I am here to initiate you into the right conduct "

For, "if the thirsty do not get clean water to drink, they quench their thirst with foul water "

His is the third way, the non-violent one

"A great revolution is taking shape in India I see it before me Russia passed through a kind of revolution America is passing through a second kind I have observed them both Either of them is foreign to the culture and genius of India "

India's is the third way, with its embryo in the *Bhoo-dan yajna* Vinoba is confident of success. And his confidence—confidence of a man who has reduced himself to a zero, speaks

"Those who do not give me land today, will give toworrow They cannot but give There is none who may refuse me "

Vinoba is resolute It is always "do or die" with him Appealing to all for support he says

"I invite you all to work for this revolution I seek to revolutionize thought, to revolutionize the means The sages say, youths delight in new creation, new mission Here is a mission for them, a new world to create "

Vinoba is beginning to draw the masses as Gandhi did He is forging a tremendous sanction It is in us to make it compelling When it is, the people straying away from Gandhian way, shall walk back. Or there is struggle And struggle will only add to Vinoba's stature,

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VINOBA : AN IDEAL SATYAGRAHI

MAHATMA GANDHI

[In October, 1940, the Congress launched a campaign of individual Satyagraha under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi He chose Shri Vinoba Bhave to be the first satyagrahi Explaining the object and limitations of the movement and introducing Shri Vinoba, Gandhiji wrote in "Harijan"]

I have had three days' discussion with the Working Committee. During it I unfolded my plan of civil disobedience in so far as I was able to envisage it Although I have sole charge of the campaign, I could not think of taking the first step without consultation with the members of the Working Committee In non-violent action one has to carry the co-workers with one through the mind and the heart There is no other way to enforce discipline or obedience to instructions I must admit that it was no plain sailing for me There was stubborn dissent from two members. I tried hard to carry conviction to them but I fear I failed. They will, however, yield obedience so far as it is possible for them for the sake of discipline The difference of opinion solely centred round the quantity of civil disobedience and the restriction with which it was hedged

I disclose this part of the discussion to show that my plan will fall short of the expectations of those whom the dissenters represent I would simply say to them, "Wait patiently and see what happens. Carry out instructions to the best of your ability. Do nothing to thwart the plan. If your reason rebels against it,

you will serve the cause by seceding and educating the people along your own lines That would be straight, brave and stimulating in that the people will learn to appraise the value of different methods You will cause confusion by preaching from the Congress platform anything contrary to the official programme, especially when the whole organization becomes like an army It matters little whether one person offers civil disobedience or many The rest have to render such support as they may be called upon to do "

The plan is simply this Direct action will be commenced by Shri Vinoba Bhave and for the time being confined to him only And since it is to be confined to individual civil disobedience and that too of him only, it will be so conducted by him as to exclude others directly or indirectly But since it concerns freedom of speech the public will be involved to an extent It is open to them either to listen to him or not

But much will depend upon what the Government wish to do In spite of all attempts to confine civil disobedience to individuals and for the moment to one only, they can precipitate a crisis by making it a crime to listen to him or read anything written by him But I think and believe that they do not want to invite though they hold themselves in readiness to cope with any trouble that may face them

I have discussed with Shri Vinoba various plans so as to avoid all unnecessary friction or risk The idea is to make all actions as strictly non-violent as is humanly possible. One man's non-violent action would be despised and ridiculed by the non-believer in it In truth, while the effect of a given violent action can be reduced to mathematical terms that of non-violent action defies all calculation and has been known to falsify many that have been hazarded How far I shall be able to present an example of unadulterated non-violence remains to be seen

Who is Vinoba Bhave and why has he been selected? He is an undergraduate having left college after my return to India in 1915 He is a Sanskrit scholar He joined the Ashram almost at its inception He was among the first members In order to better qualify himself he took one year's leave to prosecute further studies in Sanskrit And practically at the same hour at which he left the Ashram a year before, he walked into it without notice I had forgotten that he was due to arrive that day. He has taken

part in every menial activity of the Ashram from scavenging to cooking Though he has a marvellous memory and is a student by nature, he has devoted the largest part of his time to spinning in which he has specialized as very few have. He believes in universal spinning being the central activity which will remove the poverty in the villages and put life into their deadness Being a born teacher, he has been of the utmost assistance to Asha Devi in her development of the Scheme of education through handicrafts Shri Vinoba has produced a textbook taking spinning as the handicraft It is original in conception He has made scoffers realize that spinning is a handicraft par excellence which lends itself to being effectively used for basic education He has revolutionized takli-spinning and drawn out its hitherto unknown possibilities For perfect spinning probably as has no rival in all India

He has abolished every trace of untouchability from his heart. He believes in communal unity with the same passion that I have. In order to know the best mind of Islam, he gave one year to the study of the Quaran in the original He, therefore, learned Arabic. He found this study necessary for cultivating a living contact with the Muslims in his neighbourhood

He has an army of disciples and workers who would rise to any sacrifice at his bidding He is responsible for producing a young man who has dedicated himself to the service of lepers Though an utter strange to medicine, this worker has by singular devotion mastered the method of treatment of lepers and is now running several clinics for their care Hundreds owe their care to his labours He has now published a handbook in Marathi for the treatment of lepers Vinoba was for years Director of the Mahila Ashram in Wardha His devotion to the cause of Daridranarayan took him first to a village near Wardha and now he has gone still further and lives in Pavnar, five miles from Wardha, from where he has established contact with villagers through the disciples he has trained

He believes in the necessity of the political independence of India He is an accurate student of history But he believes that real independence of the villagers is impossible without the constructive programme of which khadi is the centre He believes that the Charkha is the most suitable outward symbol of non-violence which has become an integral part of his life He has

taken an active part in the previous satyagraha campaigns He has never been in the limelight on the political platform With many co-workers he believes that silent constructive work with civil disobedience in the background is far more effective than the already havily crowded political platform And he thoroughly believes that non-violent resistance is impossible without a heart-belief in and practice of constructive work. Vinoba is an out and out war-resister, but he respects equally with his own the conscience of those who whilst not being out and out war-resisters, have yet strong conscientious objection to participation in the present war Though Vinoba represents both the types I may want to select another who will represent only one type namely conscientious objection to participation in the present war

It was necessary to introduce Vinoba at length to the public in order to justify my choice This will perhaps be the last civil disobedience struggle which I shall have conducted Naturally, I would want it to be as flawless as it can be Moreover, the Congress has declared that it will avoid all avoidable embarrassments to the Government consistently with its own existence For that reason too, I had to strive to produce the highest quality, irrespective of quantity

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THE GOD WHO GIVES AWAY LAND

ROBERT TRUMBULL

Where else but in India, in the atomic age, would polished statesmen pay serious attention to a 90-pound ascetic clad only in loin cloth and sandals, who walks from village to village preaching simply that those who have much should give of their fortunes to those who have none ?

Propagating this Gandhian doctrine, Acharya Vinoba Bhave (the name rhymes with ave, as in Ave Maria) became a power in India in a few months When he came to New Delhi at the invitation of Premier Jawaharlal Nehru the Government built him a hut of bamboo and thatch in a public park at a cost, reportedly, of $800, and the leading men of India went there to talk to the new sage The fame of the gray-bearded, 57 year-old Hindu philosopher by then had gone beyond the borders of his own country, and he seems to have becomes an important permanent fixture in the national life

Bhave's achievements by merely appealing to the goodness in human nature have been amazing His eloquent sermons on-non-violence as a solution to economic ills are credited with winning thousands of oppressed peasants away from Communism in Telangana, where the Communists had a bloody agrarian uprising well under way Single-handed, he attacked India's grave land problem, which is the source of rural unrest, and swiftly brought about the redistribution of 35,000 acres of land by landlords to their tenants, without coercion or the payment of an anna.

Although Bhave's concrete accomplishment to date hardly dents the land problem, his sermons and prayer meeting in the villages have caused a revolution in thinking wherever he has appeared The Central Ministry of Food and Agriculture has been sufficiently impressed with his methods to offer 10,000,000 acres of Government-owned cultivable wasteland for him to distribute, personally, among the landless The Acharya—this is a Hindu honorific meaning "preceptor"—replied with a thirty-page memorandum raising practical questions about Government aid, condition of the land, taxes, and so on This was taken under official study

Bhave's appeal is essentially religious A follower of Gandhi since his youth, the Acharya imitates his late mentor's way of life in all particulars, and even bears a physical resemblance to the Mahatma, which is accentuated by his dress By his appearance, his sermons and his ascetic way of life he strikes a responsive chord in the vein of mysticism that runs in all good Hindus particularly the unsophisticated villagers who make up the bulk of India's 357,000,000 inhabitants Gandhi had this quality, but no other Indian leader, not even the idolized Nehru, quite fully possessed it until Bhave emerged

In any Western country a figure like Vinoba Bhave-half-naked, with unkempt hair and beard, eccentric in habits and preaching unorthodox economics—would invite decision, and such a man might be arrested as a vagabond or confinnd as a psychopath Yet, in India his appearance is not too far from normal "Holy Men" can and do walk stark naked on the streets of Delhi without interesting the law

By Indian standards of dress and comportment Bhave is hardly more eccentric, or perhaps less so, than many long-haired zealots who occupy soap boxes unmolested in the public squares of American cities

Persons preaching special causes are common in India Besides the naked Sadhus already mentioned there are the orthodox Jains, who wear gauze over their mouths so that their expelled breath won't harm microscopic life in the air and who brush the ground before them with grass whisks while walking in order to avoid unwritting assassination of insects as they set down their feet

Peculiar costumes or no costumes at all are respected as

denoting a man's adherence to his principles, which may be religious or nationalist Indians have strong pride in their native culture and in their national individuality Bhave's loin cloth, his scorn of medicine and ordinary diet and his deliberate separation from ordinary canons of thought evoke popular appeal here, for they represents to old-school Hindus a reversions to their ancient Sanskritic culture and a rebellion against the Western civilization that until recently enslaved them So Bhave's appearance and his extreme asceticism, which isn't feigned, are assets to him in furthering his mission

The Nehru Government, which, if not mystic itself, at least recognizes this strain in the common people, evidently saw in Bhave a unique personal vehicle for reaching the masses in a way that no official could hope to do Skeptics in the more worldly circles of the capital wonder of the Government's discovery of Bhave had anything to do with the national election campaign going on at this time Bhave is non-political and has expressed himself against campaigning for votes beyond factual presentation of party policies, but one would nevertheless expect that his emergence under the Nehru Administration's aegis would have some favourable influence on the peasantry's doubtful regard for the ruling party

Bhave became a mystic in this teens Like countless Hindu devotees before him, he emulated the greatest Indian mystic of all, Gautama the Buddha, and ran away from his home in Baroda State to seek enligntenment in the holy city of Benares, on the banks of the sacred Mother Ganges There he studied Hindu Philosophy, but found the ancient books were not enough Seeking a new "way" he journyed to Gandhi's ashram, or religious retreat, at Sabarmati, near Ahmedabad. He became a favourite of the Mahatma. When a rich patron offered to finance a new ashram, Gandhi sent Bhave to establish one at Sewagram, in Central India, in 1921. This became Bhave's home for the rest of his life, and later Gandhi himself made his headquarters there.

Bhave remained one of the dedicated company that surrounded the Mahatma until the end Gandhi chose him for the honor of being the first man to court arrest in the passive resistance campaign of 1939 against entry of India into World War II before the Governmant had accertained the wishes of the Indian people In his career with Gandhi, Bhave was jailed by the British six

times On Gandhi's death, Bhave, by now an Acharya to his followers, came out of ashram life to continue propagation of his master's teachings, but after brief prominence he returned to obsurity until this year

Bhave's censational rise to country-wide influence and international renown grew out of his brooding on the Communist bloodshed in Telangana, a large roughly defined area of Hyderabad State where 8,000,000 peasants endure some of the worst land tyranny in the world. Even slavery exists today in Telangana Two years ago the Communists aroused the oppressed tillers and a sanguinary reign of terror began, with wholesale murder of landlords and forcible confiscation of their holdings. Until a worried Government struck back with augmented soldiery and police, there were districts in Telagana that were entirely under Communist rule, red pockets in free India

With a few followers, the Acharya set out for Telangana on foot last April He disregarded warnings of police, who themselves hardly dared set foot where the Acharya prepared to go with no armament but his philosophy He likewise spurned offers of protection against the fierce tigers, leopards and wild boars that menace the traveller on jungle paths Bhave made it clear that his own life was a matter of no concern to him whatsoever, and this was his protection against the Communist guerillas, who were more murderous than the jungle beasts

In the next few months, the slender little social evangelist was to walk 1,800 miles through five states in south, central and north India, gathering countless followers for *ahimsa* (non-violence) and Bhoomidan yajna (land gift sacrifice) Bhoomidan yajna is the phrase that has captured the nation When word passed through the countryside that Acharya Vinoba Bhave was to appear at a certain village, thousands came afoot and by bullock cart from miles around to hear him He became known in Telangana as "the god who gives away land"

The mystic's daily travels were marked by continuous festival In the villages and along the roads where he was to pass, the poorest hats were festooned with palms and mango leaves—symbol of good for tune. The villagers many of them gaunt and scantily clad in rags, flocked around the Acharya to touch his feet—a mark of respect to holy men in India—and to deck him with garlands of flowers

His departure from a village at dawn was a noisy event · fortunately, most Indians are very early risers (they retire early, too, for electric lighting is rare in the villages, and kerosene is expensive and rationed) As the Acharya prepared to resume his endless hiking tour, villagers would line up behind him, set up a great clamour of drums, cymbals and bugles, and chant the various names of the deities, especially of Rama and his wife, Sita, Gandhi's favourites Singing Hindu hymns, they would follow their new idol for a mile, at which time Bhave would bid them goodbye with the appealing Indian gesture of folded hands raised to the breast

The Acharya's day, like Gandhi's begins at about 3 o'clock in the morning, Rising from his humble charpoy, or woven cot, he leads his retinue in an hour and a half of prayer and meditation. They start the day's walk at about 5 Bhave, despite his age and frailty, is a prodigious walker, averaging five miles an hour at a steady pace that never slackens As he moves through the morning on the dusty roads, disciples, local officials and interviewers may talk to him

By noon he will have reached the village of his destination Only then do the Acharya and his encourage have their austere breakfast—vegetarian, of course, and with no tea or coffee. Bhave takes only butter-milk and gur, or unrefined sugar He suffers from a duodenal ulcer, bur scorns medical treatment and keeps the ailment under control with this diet

Then there is rest for a couple of hours, followed by a half hour of spinning khaddar, homespun cotton, thus, carrying on the dramatization of Gandhi's formula for promoting home industry. At 3 o'clock, Bhave holds a unique informal court, at which grievances are brought to him and his advice is sought In their fervor, villagers accept the Acharya's decisions as a command. For many of them accustomed to fascistic police and londlord oppression and the vagaries of princely rule, the Acharya's courts have been their first experience with real justice

In these sessions, which, of course, have no law behind them but the law of God, the Acharya has patched up family feuds of generations past, forced the settlement of domestic quarrels, persuaded grasping employers to pay back wages owing to needy workers, and has undone abuses of the arrogant local police Invariably, the penitent offender becomes a Bhave follower.

Comes 5 o'clock and the Acharya, in Gandian tradition, leads his daily prayer meeting Devotions begin with readings from the sacred scriptures of all the major religions of India—Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, and, of course, the beloved Bhagavad Gita

Bhave preaches his hightly sermon in Gandhi's fashion, rambling, from topic to topic, answering letters, dealing with whatever problems of the day happen to come to his mind He dwells most frequently and successfully on voluntary land redistribution His most effective plea is directed to the sense of family solidarity that is the important governing factor in orthodox Hindu life Customarily, property is divided among the male heirs The Acharya pleads with the landlords, "Regard me as your additional son, and give me my share for the poor," and many of them do

Deeds are handed over on the spot, and distribution is made to deserving landless tillers, many of them untouchables, by a board of five trustees, including two Untouchables The Acharya believes every family should have five acres, on the average, the amount varies according to needs and condition of the soil He will accept any amount, and has received gifts of hundreds of acres and one, from a poor proprietor, of a single gunta, or one-fortieth of an acre

Bhave brushes aside the questions of fragmentation, a division of land into uneconomic holdings, which is one of the inherited agrarian problems in India This has brought him considerable criticism from sponsors of the zamindari (landed estate) abolition movement, who have laws on the statue books of several states of orderly redistribution of land, with compensation to the owners over a period of years from Government collection of rent until the debts are paid

Bhave has announced a goal of 50,000,000 acres—one-sixth of the total cultivable area of all India—in the *bhoomi dan yajna* crusade Impressive as his work has been, he would hardly reach his goal at the present rate of progress But public leaders, including Nehru, have been struck by the Achary's success in getting his people to think along a gentle line, as Gandhi did

Premier Nehru, impressed with Bhave's approach in Telangana, invited him to come to New Delhi and impart his ideas to the National Planning Commission a high-powered body of

which Nehru is the chairman Bhave, then 785 miles away, undertook to walk to the capital Some miles out he was met by hundreds of Delhi enthusiasts who travelled to a rendezvous in cars to walk the remaining distance with the emaciated leader, who was already a national figure

The Acharya could have lived where he liked, Gandhi in his last couple of years inhabited an apartment in the mansion of G D Birla, one of India's richest industrialists, and was assassinated while walking to his evening prayer meeting in the Birla House gardens Bhave elected to settle in Rajghat, the memorial park surrounding India's most revered national monument a plain concrete platform on the spot where Gandhi's body was cremated near the banks of sacred river Jumna Next to Gandhi's *samadhi*, or shrine, the Government at Bhave's direction erected a neat, three-room hut of bamboo with a roof of grass thatch, and built a surfaced motor road directly to it from the highway a few hundred yards away

This red-earth driveway was travelled by the biggest men in India in the next few days The visiting notables, President Rajendra Prasad and Premier Nehru among them, and Oxford and Cambridge graduates and skilled administrators holding British knigethoods (no longer recognized officially here, but still exploited by some), shucked their shoes as they approached the sage, and sat before him cross-legged, like school boys

The surroundings were strikingly reminiscent of Gandhi's camps While the master lay on a charpoy, pulling a wisp of cloth about his bare shoulders when the wind blew, dedicated females in white drifted in and out of sight, wraith-like, about household tasks Earnest male secretaries sat near by with note-books, taking down the sage's every word Serious young girls, wearing black-rimmed spectacles, the same kind that were always near Gandhi, hovered about Bhave

The Acharya's discussions with the Planning Commission brought out no great measure of agreement, but this high-level body had numerous sessions with the sage, each of several hours' duration President Rajendraprasad visited Bhave on the mystic's day in Delhi Before he left the President pledged a gift of acreage—the amount was not made public—from his own private estate in Bihar Nehru came several times, staying more than an hour on each occasion, despite the preoccupations of his office and

the current election campaign

After eleven busy days in New Delhi, Bhave resumed his mission, trekking on into the State of Uttar Pradesh, a landlord-ridden territory, to continue his crusade to defeat Communism by free gifts of the "haves" to the "have-nots" Reports have come back to the capital that the gentle ascetic has been adding to bhoomidan yajna at the rate of 300 acres a day, and the Indian newspapers continue to print laudatory editorials and feature articles on the remarkable Acharya He is, no doubt, a phenomenon that could happen only in India, and it is undeniable that here, in the peculiar setting suited to his talents, he has done much good

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THE WIZARD OF MODERN INDIA

SURESH RAMBHAI

On July 3, 1932, Vinoba, the apostle of Bhu-Dana-Yagna or Land-Gift-Mission completed his tour of Uttar Predesh But for a brief halt of 11 days at Delhi in November, he has covered village after village, district after district of this State During his march he secured about two and a half lakhs of acres of land for *Daridra Narayana,* the landless poor

Curiously enough little is known of the life-history of this unique wizard Nor does he encourage his biographers As he himself says, most of his real life has been lived rather within than without and if his biography is to be written he, has to write it himself Like Mahatma Gandhi's "Experiments with Truth," Vinoba's autobiography, whenever it comes to light, will be the enchanting story of the pilgrimage of a soul in constant communion with itself and ceaselessly moving ahead to its cherished objective of the realisation of the Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God

In an immortal verse Tulsidas has compared the character of a saint to that of a cotton fibre since both undergo suffering to contribute to the welfare of others. And just as the black soil of Maharashtra is the richest cotton producing area of the country so also it has been an eternal source from which has sprung up a perennial current of saints who have slaked the parched throat not only of the people of Maharashtra but that of the whole country Nivritti, Gyandev, Ramdas, Namdev, Eknath and Tukaram are familiar names who have found an abiding place in India's legend,

history and song The latest member of the self-same procession is the beggar-saint of Paunar, Vinayak Narhari Bhave, commonly known as Vinoba as Gandhiji gave him the name Born on August 11, 1895 at Gagoda in the Kolaba district of Bombay Presidency, Vinoba passed a large part of his early life at Baroda, the capital of Baroda State where his father, who passed away in September 1947, was in Government service Vinoba is the eldest of three brothers, the younger, Sri Balkoba is running the well-known Nature-cure clinic at Uruli Kanchan (Poona) and the youngest, Sri Shivaji, doing constructive work at Dhulia in Khandesh All the three brothers are '*bal brahmacharies*' The father, Sri Narhari Sambhurao Bhave, was a kind and genial soul who never lost his temper and was always truthful and methodical in his ways Well versed in music, he had a passion for it and has written two books on the subject Also he was very much interested in dyeing and painting After retirement he gave some of his time to the Maharashtra branch of the A I S A

One evening in September 1950 I was at Paunar when, on being reminded by his Secretary that it was his father's third death anniversary, Vinoba referred to him in his post-prayer speech But it is the mother about wnom he speaks the least for she has contributed the most in his make-up A deeply religious and devoted woman, a Maharashtra Brahmin to the core, with the songs of saints at her lips, she lived a very pious and quite an ideal family life Being her first-born, he was also her most beloved It was from her, that Vinya, as she called him, developed his wonderful asceticism and taste for the inner fights of the soul Whatever she did, she dedicated it to God and never took any thing in the household until she had shared it with her neighbours, the duty of distribution being enjoined upon her Vinya

In 1907 Vinoba entered the Baroda High School He was a voracious reader specially keen in Mathematics He has remained a mathematician all his life, for he does nothing unless he satisfied himself by making calculations about it That is why there is no wastage about him, and he once said that during the whole of his school and college life he wasted not even a minute of his time He was also quite fond of newspapers, among which he read out *Kesari*, the well-known mouth-piece of Lokmanya Tilak, to his mother every day He took his Matric Examination in

November 1913

But Vinoba was, it seems, not content with his life and began to think of leaving home for good and give himself up to high work Two years of Intermediate were of intense inner agitation and suffering In 1916 Vinoba, an undergraduate, came out of the Baroda College During the past few years he had read so much that his eye-sight fell down to minus eight But his memory being strong, sayings after sayings of Maharashtra saints were committed to his heart and he thus enjoyed an intellectual realm all his own His study helped him immensely later to translate the Sanskrit Gita into Marathi parallel couplets. When I requested him one day to take out some time and translate the Gita into Hindi as well he replied, "Well I can't do that, for I have not read your Hindi saints except Tulsidas, that too only his Ramayana and Vinaya Patrika As regards Marathi, I had mugged up all I could lay hands upon long-long ago "

From his early years Vinoba has been fond of walking In Baroda, he with his few friends, used to walk for three to four hours every day and covered some sixteen miles daily Walking and reading can be said to be his main two occupations In the Barada Central Library, his was a familiar figure, with his shirt or kurta hanging on the shoulder In 1914 at College he started a Vidyarthi Mandal, a sort of study circle

The year 1916 marks the close of one chapter of Vinoba's life and the commencement of another Mahatma Gandhi had by now come upon the Indian scene and started an Ashram at Kochrab in Gujarat Vinoba joined it But after some time he took one year study leave Gandhiji testifies to it that Vinoba returned to the Ashram exactly after one year, to the very day. As he said in a letter to Gandhiji, dated February 10, 1918, during these twelve months he strictly observed Ashram rules and regulations and what he did is simply awful During the period, he studied the Upanisnads, the Gita, the Brahma Sutra and Shankar Bhashya, the Manusmiriti, the Patanjala Yoga-Darshan and read through the Nyaya Sutra, Vaisheshik Sutra and Yagnavalkya Smriti and took a vow her to take salt or spices Besides he conducted a Gita class of six students, a Gyaneshwari class of four students, an Upanishad class of two, an English class of two and a big Hindi class Also he covered 400 miles on foot during which he delivered 50 discourses on the Gita, etc Concluding his

letter, he asked Gandhiji to accept him as his son Bapu blessed him and wished him a life of service to the country

In 1918 Vinoba returned to the Sabarmati Asham Three years later the late Seth Jamnalal Bajaj came to Gandhiji requesting him the gift of the Ashram's most blossoming flower, Vinoba, for a constructive-work centre at Wardha Bapu agreed and so in 1921, Vinoba came to Wardha to direct and guide the Mahila Ashram With him come, some of his ablest colleagues who are working right upto now

Another important event in 1918 in Vinoba's life was the death of his near and revered mother At Bapu's bidding he had gone there earlier at her service But he did not participate in her funeral ceremony for he wanted to perform to last rites himself whereas the orthodox custom allowed only the professional priest to do it And he spent the time at home in reciting the Gita and the Upanishads.

Vinoba's activities from 1921 to 1947 may be regarded as the researches both of a soul-physicist in the laboratory of his self and of a cottage chemist in the laboratory of his Ashram village The former took him to cosmic spiritual heights, while the latter found expression in the enrichment of the various items of Gandhiji's constructive programme, specially khadi, village industries, Nai Talim and safai In January 1933 he shifted to Nalwadi, a village about a mile and half from Wardha, where he resolved to support himself by spinning work alone and he spun for hours and hours going deep into the various aspects of khadi craft Illness overtook him and he was advised to go to hills for rest He told Bapu that he had chosen his own hill station—a desolated hillock Like piece of land by the side of the Paunar river, some four miles from Wardha town, where stood a cottage built by Seth Jamnalalji He gave it the name of Paramdham Ashram which has remained his headquarters ever since

Again, it was from Wardha that Vinoba took his silent part in the political movements of Gandhiji He was among the moving spirits of the Nagpur Flag Satyagraha of 1923, his other companions being Seth Jamnalalji, Mahatma Bhagwandeen, and Sri Nilkanthrai Deshmukh Next year, in 1924, Bapu sent him to Guruvayoor, Travancore in the Harijan Temple-Entry Satyagraha The climax came in October 1940 when he appeared before the world as India's foremost Satyagrahi of the Second

World War In the individual Satyagraha movement he went to jail thrice As in 1930-31 he was again arrested in 1942 and released three years later

Returning to Paunar in 1945, he took up a new programme of the scavenger of the village Surgaon Daily he walked down three to four miles from Paunar to Surgaon commenced his work regularly at eight o'clock, in heat or cold, sun or rain Nothing could interrupt him except the death of Bapu when he felt suddenly called upon to undertake higher and more serious responsibilities It was at his persuasion that the Sarvodaya Samaj was founded in March 1948 Sometime after he went round the country and took interest in the problem of the resettlement of the Meoes near Delhi That too, however, did not pacify his inner urges Again an illness came to his rescue and after severe hard thinking he resolved upon a new venture of physical labour and self-sufficiency at Paramdham in which he himself worked in the fields for eight to ten hours a day That experiment goes on still with a band of selfless workers devoted to it under his guidance

While busy in his Samya-Yoga work, Vinoba was urged upon by leading members of Sarvodaya Samaj to atttend the third session at Shivarampalli (Hyderabad-Dn) He consented and on 8th March 1951 left Paunar on foot and after covering more than 300 miles reached Shivarampalli on 7th April On his way back he thought of going through the Telangana area It was at Pachampalli village in Nalgonda district on 18th April that the idea of Bhu-Dan-Yagna flashed across his mind and with Ram-nam on his lips he launched upon the Bhu-Dan-Yagna, which is now a country-wide movement

As has been said above, Vinoba translated Gita into Marathi in 1930-31 and gave it the name of Gitai Gita+Ai Gita the mother), which has sold into thousands and lakhs His devotion to Gita is matchless and complete As he says, Gita is his life-element (*Pran-tatwa*) and he lives in the Gita-air His discourses on Gita, Gita Pravachan, are a wonderful exposition of the Gita It has been translated into Hindi, Telegu, Cannarese, Malayalam and several other languages of the country

Like a true devotee of Gita, Vinoba refuses to distinguish between 'Karma' (Action) and 'Gynan' (Knowledge) and 'Bhakti' (devotion) and feels that all three must go together as the shape

and weight and sweetness of a 'laddoo' go He is, therefore, a master of action and hero of thought and genius of devotion As a master of action he has been a farmer, scavenger, teli, coolie, etc As a hero of thought he has given some very illustrious gems to the Marathi literature Besides, Vinoba is a linguist of eminence Marathi is his mother tongue, so also Gujarati He has acquired a thorough knowledge of Hindi, Bengali, Oriya and Punjabi He knows all the four South Indian languages, Tamil, Telugu, Kannara and Malayalam In Telangana he translated the Shlokas of Gita in Telugu and recently he was studying the classical Tamil Veda English and French he learnt at school That he is always young as a student is clear by the fact that he learnt Arabic at the age of 46 and Studied the Holy Quran which he can recite remarkably well As a genius of devotion he went into trance and tears rolled down his cheeks when he opened the Lakshmi Narayan Temple of Wardha Thus his whole life is dedicated to God whom he wants to see in the smallest particle as also in the poorest and most down-trodden The late Sri Mahadev Desai wrote about him

> "Vinoba has something which others have not His first-rank characteristic is to resolve his decision into action the moment the former is once made His second characteristic is continuous growth Besides Bapu, I found this quality in Vinoba alone "

This is perfectly true Like a flowing stream Vinoba is always new and fresh Yet he observes his routine with a sunlike regularity His refusal to cut short his programme when he met with a serious accident near Meerut in November last, bears this out. And every day he has something new to say in his post-prayer speech

Vinoba, though on foot, is fast moving onward He is not merely to take an acre of land here or half there His is to bring about a revolution in the life of the society as a whole The Bhu-Dan-Yajna is an initial Satyagraha to this end One can well see that time is not far off when he will gave a call for Sarv-Dan-Yajna and turn the present unfortunate tide in the economic, social and political life of the country But what forms the future Satyagraha take nobody can say Yet none need be in doubt about the final objective, the attainment of economy and social freedom of the

country The Bhu-Dana-Yajna, therefore, is the first step And the more selflessly and sincerely and resolutely it is taken, the easier the journey ahead Vinoba is on the march! Long Live Vinoba!

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VINOBA BHAVE

BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

In the United States, a question often put to me was, now that Gandhiji had gone, is there any one who can take his place in India ? On my return I find to my delight the nearst to an answer Vinaba Bhave is proving that *ahimsa*, or the principle of love, when applied to human affairs, has still the power which Gandhiji claimed for it

Unlike Gandhiji, Vinoha who is still in his fifties, is a scholar Gandhiji's acquaintance with the Indian classics was slight, while Vinoba is well versed in Sanskrit and is soaked in the wisdom of our past Gandhiji represented the soil of India instinctively In Vinoba we have Gandhiji's instinct supplemented by almost unbelievable knowledge of the best thought of India through the ages

The difference in the nature of these two men accounts for the fact that though both have the same convictions and the same moral fervour, Gandhiji has become a world figure while Vinoba is practically unknown Gandhiji was essentially a public man, interesting himself in activities which brought him into contact with important persons in every walk of life, while Vinoba is by nature a recluse who shrinks from publicity His interests are scholarly and, when they include people, are confined to those immediately around him At the same time it is non-violence or love which is his gospel like that of Gandhiji Let us see how it has expressed itself in Vinoba's life.

His non-violence or love has led him to take interest in all religions He has studied the scriptures of the important religions

of the world, more especially Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam and Christianity Not content with reading to Koran in translation, he went to the trouble of learning Arabic, just to be able to study the Koran in the original His knowledge of Bible, especially of the Gospels, is astounding He can quote cheaper and verse, and can interest Jesus' life and teachings with greater understanding than many Christian theologians under whom I have studied In his study of other religions, his doctrine of love makes him look for their merits rather than for their defects

His own language is Marathi, but besides it and Sanskrit he has studied Persian, Arabic, English and most of the living languages of India, including Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kanarese In fact, language study used to be one of his occupations during his 1942-45 imprisonment Early in the morning, one could hear him reciting aloud in Tamil in his bath some of the poems of the Tamil poet, Bharati His love recognises no cultural or language barriers To him the thoughts of all people are equally lovable

He is an accurate student of history and civilisation, and has very penetrating knowledge of the evolution of ideas and institutions in India and elsewhere, including western countries His views about the West are generally sympathetic, balanced and objective

He knows no communal prejudice In fact, if anything he is more critical of his own community in regard to communal conflicts than of other communities A few days ago, he said in his tour through Telangana that Pakistan was really the outcome of Hindu aloofness and the attitude of untouchability amongst Hindus to the followers of other religions, rather than due to any teaching of Islam itself Such self-criticism follows directly from his doctrine of love, which teaches that we must not look for faults in others, but first and foremost seek the fault in ourselves and remove it, for if our conduct is right and proper, our opponent will cease to be our opponent and become our ally

Vinoba makes no distinction between caste or outcast, rich or poor His love makes him want to serve the most despised So his heart went out to the leper, and he induced one of his workers to dedicate himself completely to the service of lepers

Like Gandhiji, Vinoba believes in the method of non-violence or love in the political sphere, not as a matter of expediency, but

as a creed Therefore, it was that Gandhiji initiated his movements of individual Civil Disobedience in 1940 with Vinoba as the first representative of the people's protest against the war He described Vinoba then as the ideal satyagrahi or one who came nearest to embodying in his own life and thought the ideal of non-violence or love

But Vinoba's heart is really not in politics as such, but with the down-trodden masses of our land Therefore, he is content to bury himself in a few villages His idea is to make villagers self-dependent, capable of managing their affairs themselves and safe-guarding their own interests, for non-violence cannot tolerate control and exploitation of villages by outside agencies To bring this about, Vinoba believes that villages have to become more or less economically self-sufficient, producing as far as possible all that they require for themselves, especially in the way of the necessities of life That means paying special attention to agriculture and village industries

Symbolic of this movement to enable the villager to stand on his own legs and to revise village economic life, is hand-spinning which Gandhiji organized throughout the country Vinoba took to spinning avidly and brought his scholarly, painstaking and investigating mind to bear on it, and became an expert in the art himself and wrote a text-book on Hand-spinning as a Basic Craft for teachers of basic education

In addition to all this, of course, is the need under a philosophy of love for people to live together in peace and unity and to co-operate with each other for each other's good Vinoba never tires of trying to achieve such unity and co-operation in the villages where he has set up for work

All these activities are included in the movement for Sarvodaya founded by Gandhiji for the full development of all members of society, none being excluded, rich or poor, capable or incapable, strong or weak The doctrine of love enjoins that none are to be exterminated or eliminated, but all are to develop side by side for the common good of all And Vinoba is out to establish such a scheme of things in the villages

As over against this, Communism preaches class-hatred and violent extermination of the propertied classes It has established itself in Telangana in Hyderabad State Vinoba decided to put his non-violent philosophy of Sarvodaya to test in this Communist-

ridden area, and went there as a messenger of peace and non-violence His life was in danger but he refused police protection He interviewed Communist leaders in jail and outside, and told them that he was as anxious as they to reach the Communist goal of freedom from oppression and exploitation for the common man, but that the only way of achieving this end was through non-violence He pleaded with them, therefore, as their sympathiser and friend to give up their methods of violence He toured the villages and soon saw that if Communism had entrenched itself in them it was only because big landlords many of whom owned 10,000 acres of land each, kept the land to themselves and exploited the labour of landless peasants The only solution, Vinoba was convinced, was to distribute the land to the cultivators But how was this to be done? The Communists did it by preaching hatred against the landlord and inciting the peasant to murder, loot, burn and forcibly take possession of the land. This orgy of crime has been costing the State's exchequer Rs 50 million annually But what Vinoba armed with nothing but his message of love, did was to appeal to these landlords on the basis of justice and brotherhood to donate their lands to the peasants He covered nearly 450 miles of rough country on foot, visiting almost 300 villages in about six weeks in the fierce midsummer heat of July 1951 and won the hearts of both rich and poor by his transparent sincerity, selflessness, and faith in man's sense of justice, and love. People thronged around him, and drank in what he had to say. He appealed to the best in them, whether they were landlord, peasant or Communist Emaciated, dressed in a loin-cloth, living on little else than curds, and trudging on foot from three in the morning, he impressed the people as a man of God, seeking nothing for himself, but undergoing suffering that they may live happily in love and unity Such redeeming love could not go in vain Central to his mission was his prayer-meeting, where people saw that his life and teaching were rooted in religion

That was enough India's masses, rich and poor, trained through the centuries to respect non-violence, self-renunciation and religion, responded, and it is reported that actually 10,112 acres of land were freely donated by the landlords by the end of his tour Vinoba has appointed a three-man committee to distribute this land among the cultivators each peasant family to receive roughly one acre of wet land and five acres of dry land And in regard to

land forcibly seized by the Communist he has declared that these should be given back to the landlords, who should voluntarily give them to the peasants The virtue of this method is that it is twice blessed It blesses him who gives and him who receives Both landlord and peasant are united once more and co-operate with each other for their mutual advantage It seems too good to be true And yet it has happened Truth is stranger than fiction

Gandhiji applied the law of love with phenomenal success in the political sphere, and India achieved her freedom from foreign rule non-violently Now Vinoba is applying it in the economic sphere, showing that it can yield phenomenal results there also to free the weak from the strong He has proved by results that people do respond to an appeal to their reason and conscience So it is not necessary to resort to violence as Communism does Indeed the only way to achieve a permanent solution of problems of human conflict is through love and appeal to the highest in man When this is effectively done, the erstwhile opponent is converted and becomes one's best helper and friend It is India's answer, based on centuries of aspiration after non-violence, to Russian communism and appears to be full of promise for effectively overcoming the Communist menance all over the world and for turning hate to love, and strife to peace This is the epoch making significance of what this humble devotee of non-violence, following the footsteps of Gandhiji, has done in a remote corner of our land

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AN INTERVIEW WITH SRI VINOBA

J B Kripalani

With his great erudition and Sadhana I have always considered Sri Vinoba as a great exponent of Gandhiji's philosophy and way of life Many intellectuals consider me too as an exponent of Gandhiji's philosophy For some time I have been wondering what it is that makes Sri Vinoba's interpretation different from mine I have been conscious of the difference because it came out at some of the annual conferences of the Sarvodaya Samaj which we both attended Personally we had met but rarely and on these occasions there was no discussion about our respective points of view And so when he was in U P touring on his "Bhoomidan" mission I sought the earlist opportunity to meet and have a talk with him I met him twice, once at Ghaziabad on the 12th November 1951 and again in Delhi on the 13th I would like to share with the public the talks I had no these two occasions Vinobaji is a man of few words and perhaps does not usually express his views on public affairs freely I had, therefore, to do most of the talking However, on both occasions I insisted on his speaking and giving me a bit of his mind regarding my views

My point of view, as I placed before him, was that I believed our present ills were largely due to our pinning faith on capitalist economy Our leaders in the Government did toy for some time with the idea of a Socialist economy but they had to abandon it, for they realised that the Administration as it was constituted today could not take up the added burden of looking after the entire production and distribution of economic goods in

the country I told Shri Vinoba that I believed that capitalism today was a decaying creed It could no more contribute to the material, moral and cultural advancement of humanity as it had done, in some measure, in its hey-days, that is, as against medieval feudalism Even then, after a short while, it wos kept going only by the expanding markets provided by imperialism and war The same is the case today The chief defect from which capitalism suffers, and must suffer, is that the purchasing power of the masses is unable to keep pace with the ever-increasing production made possible through the progressive application of science and technology Therefore, capitalism is subject to periodical depressions brought about by the low purchasing power of the masses and a glut of goods that have some time to be destroyed to keep up prices at a "remunerative" level for the capitalist Even so, capitalist economy is kept going by war production War and war preparations have become chronic these days If economic life is to be put on an equalitarian basis it can be done only through a co-ordinated and balanced economy This co-ordination and balance must embrace both agricuture and industry Gandhiji's plan of the revival and revitalisation of the village on the basis of regional economy, suitable to present conditions, aims at a peaceful solution of the economic problem An alternative solution would be through Communism But Communism could solve the economic problem only through political and economic dictatorship which, in its wake, would bring other evils Besides, dictatorship, in the very nature of things, can be but a temporary device in a emergent situation It cannot provide a permanent solution consistent with the modern man's urge for some freedom to regulate his own life

I also said that in recently-freed colonial countries, with a vast population and limited acreage of land, capitalist economy in its decadent phase will not be able to solve the problem of supply of even the barest needs of the people China, for instance, would not be able to provide for the primary needs of her population on a capitalist basis In India a revival is possible only on the Gandhian lines of decentralisation of industry and co-ordination of agriculture with industry in the rural areas, is necessary, with the supply of cheap electric power to the village artisan Sri Vinoba was in agreement with these views

About politics, I said that Constructive workers had made a mistake in eschewing politics altogether To this he said that there was a need for some individuals and groups eschewing politics and confining themselves to constructive work, for whatever the character of the Government, it will surely lag behind the progressive ideals of the reformers—be they individuals or groups I readily accepted this proposition, but added that such individuals and groups must possess three qualifications The first of these is that they must be active and dynamic and not be satisfied with mere routine They must also be progressive in their outlook The second condition is that individuals and groups that set the pace to reform and progress must realise that those who take no active steps to change the present inequitous system help to maintain that system So far, the Constructive workers have not only remained comparatively silent about the failures of the Congress Governments but in many cases have supported the Governments It is just like what the Christian Churches do They remain "neutral" in politics The result is that everywhere they help to maintain by their silence, the inequitous *status quo* The work of reform then falls upon people who, by their nature, are more interested in power politics than in reform The third condition necessary for Constructive workers is to see that their work does not become something like missionary work undertaken to save their own souls and hence, indifferent to the time factor Gandhiji worked even the Constructive Programme under a sense of urgency If a sense of urgency was necessary than, it is much more so now because the forces of disruption and violence today are more active, more organised and more formidable If Constructive work is carried on as if the whole eternity were befor us, then the masses of people who are denied the satisfaction of their primary needs of life and who see their children dying a lingering death for want of proper nutrition, proper clothes and shelter, are likely to seek speedier methods of improving their conditions, even if these methods be violent They would then listen to every charlatan who can excite their passions

In all these things Sri Vinoba agreed with me Then I insisted upon his talking He related to me the process by which he had been led to think of his present programme of land reform He said that he had been furiously thinking how in the present state of progressive material and moral deterioration of the country he

could revive hope and confidence in Bapu's way He thought first of refugee-welfare work and came to Delhi He and his companions for some months tried their hands at it But as it was closely connected with official machinery they soon found that there was little scope for them to revive the people's hope and confidence in Bapu's principles through that work And the benefit to the refugees was also next to nil He and his friends therefore quitely retired from the field Later, he tried to help the Government in the task of the rehabilitation of Meos He got some success in this, though the work is being prolonged and some of his workers were still working in the field It is this double experience that made him think of something which could be undertaken outside the cramping influence of the Governmental bureaucratic machinery And he devised his present "Bhoomidan" mission

When I went to meet Sri Vinoba at Rajghat by appointment on the afternoon of November 13, Sri Tandan and some friends were already there and discussing Sri Vinoba's scheme of land reform—how it will work and about its possibilities When that discussion was over the talk turned upon the moral effect of the economic and political policies of our Government on the average citizen Sri Tandon gave his own instance He said he never used sugar but used to take gur But recently he had given up that too One day on asking his servant about the price he paid for gur he was told that half a pound of gur cost four annas This worked out at Rs 40 a maund Sri Tandon, therefore, gave up the use of gur because he realised that he was purchasing it in the blackmarket I said it was impossible for the average man or woman to maintain such high moral standards if social and political circumstances and, at present more especially the latter, were not favourable to their maintenance The morals of the average citizen change with social circumstances Only the heroic can transcend these social circumstances I related what I had seen in one of my Ashrams a few months back The quantity fixed of rationed cereal was nine ounces per head But eating with my companions, I saw that they were consuming as much as nine ounces per meal I asked the secretary how they managed to do it He smiled and said, "Dada, we are too poor to go to the blackmarket But there are about a hundred inmates in the Ashram and from a quarter to half of that number are constantly out attending to Khadi work in the villages. We do not return

the ration cards and draw rations for all the hundred" I was dump-founded This appeared to me worse than blackmarketing And it was being done by those who had worked for the nation for the last thirty years and in the process had silently undergone untold privations Today, while some of those who began political life with them were enjoying ministerial posts, these workers were still working for the nation on a mere pittance and the value of the allowances they got was ever diminishing That determined soldiers of the nation like these should be obliged to take recourse to such a course was morally tragic

I related all this to Sri Vinoba He admitted that social circumstances have a very powerful bearing on morals I put it to him that under the circumstances which Sri Tandon and I had described it was only heroes that could stick to even the rudiments of the moral code If even those people who had sacrificed their all to keep Constructive work going were unable to conform to the ordinary moral standards without thereby impairing their health and efficiency, and consequently, without injuring the patriotic work they were doing, there was something fundamentally wrong in our economic and political life

I was a little surprised that Sri Vinoba accepted my analysis I had thought that he was rather indifferent to sociological considerations He did not attach much importance to organisation Once he had said in a Sarvodaya meeting that organisation involved violence and he was against it He believed, instead in the reformation of the individual

Suddenly he asked me, "What do you want ? Do you want the Sarvodaya Samaj to have a political wing of its own ?" I said, "Certainly I had conceived the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party to function as such, if the Sarvodaya Samaj would allow it I had on several occasions publicly stated though without due authority, that the K M P P was the political wing of the Sarvodaya Samaj" I added, however, that if the K M P P could not be approved as such, a fresh political organisation may be set up by the Samaj itself After all Bapu did consider the political education of the electorate as an item of Constructive work I asked Vinobaji if he was himself not doing this when he advised people to consider the vote as a public trust and exercise it only in favour of candidates of integrity and efficiency

Sri Vinoba gave no reply and was silent He appeared to be deeply thinking

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VINOBA : THE WALKING SAINT

VERINDER GROVER*

Vinoba Bhave, like his master Gandiji, was frail in body but was a great scholar of Sanskrit and Marathi He also knew French English, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati and Malayalan Most of these languages he learnt himself

An an orator of distinction, his speeches were known for precision, brevity and coherence But inspite his many talents and lifelong work in Gandhiji's ashram, he successfully evaded publicity He followed the example of the unknown authors of the *Vedas* whose works live, not their names

Before Vinoba Bhave came in contact with Gandhiji and his technique of *Satyagraha* his aim in life was "to end the British Empire in India by killing Englishmen" However, under Gandhiji's influence Vinoba was completely transformed to Saint Vinoba

Vinoba Bhave was a true disciple of Gandhiji and, contrary to some criticism, the ideals of *Bhoodan, Sampatti-dan, Gram-dan* are very much consistent with the basic ideas of Gandhism He believed in evolution and his evolutionary theory has given a new form to Gandhiji's experience of truth and non-violence that Vinoba Bhave sought to establish on a scientific-philosophical footing

Like Gandhiji, Vinoba Bhave also believed that the law of

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existence is not a cruel struggle for survival and self-love is not only motive working in human affairs The very fact that family and society as co operative endeavours subsist proves that self-love is mingled with self-sacrifice, egoism with altruism, and struggle for survival with care for others Man is a mixture of good and evil Vinoba Bhave believed that the establishment of a non-violent society is not only desirable, but also inevitable What is needed is total rejection of violence as a principle in human affairs

Vinoba Bhave felt that some people in India were suffering from an inordinate fear of Communism The argument in their minds ran somewhat like this "You are working to bring about a non-violent classless social order, but the people who profess so much faith in democracy are not only not co-operating with you but are proving rather a hindrance If your efforts should fail, would it not give a free hand to the Communists ?" It is astonishing how some people scent Communism in everything Such arguments reminded Vinoba Bhave of what the *Shastras* call *Shatru-Bhakti* or devotion to God based on a feeling of hate and enmity towards him Vinoba opines that "such devotion is as effective as any other It is said that Ravana became Rama because of the intensity with which he hated the latter You become what you contemplate, whether out of love or hate Therefore, instead of fearing Communism we onght to devote all our energies to our own programme of work In a democracy such as we have in our country, no one will be able to prevent us from achieving our objective if we earnestly set about reducing economic and social disparities and eliminating poverty "[1]

After independence, Vinoba Bhave devoted much of his time to *Bhoodan* and *Gramdan* For that the went on foot covering India from one end to another But what is *Bhoodan* ? In his own words, ' I intend to solve the land problem which is the main problem for the whole of Asia It we try to solve this problem through violence, the feeling of hatred among our people would be on the increase It, on the contrary, we are able to solve this big problem through non-violence, love and peace, then co operation among the people and strength of the whole community will grow and people will be happy"

The value of Vinoba Bhave's work, howsoever un-important it

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